

The sixteenth year of Hiccup Haddock

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Summary: This is a ROTBTD fanfic with Frostcup/Hijack. Hiccup's junior year of high school is full of new friends and new experiences that ultimately lead to a major change in his life. (a tiny-teeny bit of self harm, but not cutting or anything like that) Reviews can cause new chapters.

1. Chapter 1

This is not my first fic, but it is my first Frostcup. Forgive the "Quotes". I wrote this on a tablet, with a app. In a cave, with a box of scraps!

Warnings: BoyxBoy is obvious. Highschool AU. Possible random Disney and Dreamworks cameos.

The sixteenth year of Hiccup Haddock

Chapter one: Winter, with Jack

It was cold. In fact it was downright freezing that evening, as Hiccup Horrendous Haddock dragged a wagon of art supplies through the practically frozen snow, which had just stopped falling a few minutes ago. Ms. Ana, his overzealous art teacher, (who was so enamored with people's mouths that she was sometimes called Tooth) had insisted he wait out the white stuff after he had stayed behind after school, working on plans for the school mural.

Hiccup and his father had moved to Burgess from Berk when Hiccup was only nine years old. Hiccup had spotted the differences between the two towns quickly, the people of Burgess seemed smaller, the food wasn't as tough, and winter in Burgess was pretty, and practically worshiped.

Burgess was the home of the world's most famous department store, St. North's . The owner, Nicholas , was the richest man in the area. His

store was famous for its window displays and doorbuster deals. Nicholas, dubbed North by the townspeople, was known for his holiday parties and his uncanny resemblance to Santa Claus. And then there was his adopted son.

Jackson Overland. He was seventeen years old, and better known as Jack Frost for his bleach white hair and love for winter. He was star of the Burgess high school lacrosse team and had a reputation as a class clown. Jack was treated like royalty. There wasn't a person in town who didn't know happy-go-lucky, carefree, most likely to be Prom king Jack.

Which is why Hiccup was confused when he saw Jack, covered in snow and half frozen, hugging his knees under a tree in the park. Hiccup walked past him at first but then turned, after seeing a familiar blue hoodie. Jack was strangely still, staring forward. He was pale, more so than usual.

Hiccup swallowed hard. He could only think of two options: mind his business and mind his business. But, there was something about the look on Jack's face.

Hiccup sighed, he dropped the handle of the wagon and walked off the stone path, onto the snow covered grass and beneath the tree.

He knelt down to Jack's level.

"Um. Hey." He scratched his woolen beanie covered head. " I don't know what this thing your doing is, but you have to stop. I'm pretty sure you're gonna freeze to death, and I don't think the park ranger will appreciate it when he has to move your frozen corpse."

Jack blinked then, his eyes slowly assessing Hiccup's face. He knew this boy. He had seen him before. In the hallways maybe? Did they share a class? Jack never paid attention to his classmates. He only considered them to be a audience for his shenanigans.

Who was this guy again? His eyes were a deep green, with flecks of gold. His hair was a dark brown. Jack noticed a streak of blonde poking from under his green hat. And his face: Freckles. That was the best description his half frozen brain could offer. Then he realized the boy was talking again.

Hiccup held out his hand. "So, how about you go home now, huh?"

Jack narrowed his eyes at him. Through his chattering teeth, he managed a "N-No. Not home."

"Oh. kay.." Hiccup retracted his hand for a moment, opening and closing it repeatedly. "Then I guess you can come to my house instead." He held out his hand again. "Come on."

Jack tried glaring at him. Something about the look on this kid's face, the way he furrowed his brow, those insistent freckles.

Jack placed his hand in Hiccup's, who grinned instantly, and Hiccup stood, pulling Jack up with him.

'He's strong, for a string-bean.'

"I don't live too far from here!" Hiccup said.

Jack shivered, the warmth of this boy's hand contrasted greatly with the cold of his own. Then he suddenly let go, grabbing the handle of a wagon. Jack reached for his hand for a moment. Hiccup, oblivious to this, moved forward.

'What the hell am I doing?'

It wasn't long until they had reached the Haddock residence. It was a large house, more appropriate for its owner than Hiccup. Hiccup glanced back at Jack as they walked through the foyer. He removed his coat, hat, and boots. "Hang on." Hiccup said, walking further into the house. "I'll go get you a change of clothes."

Jack removed his shoes and followed him through the foyer, stopping in the living room. Beneath his feet was a plush cream carpet. The room was large, complete with a large fireplace, a set of leather couches, and a wall mounted big screen. A light fixture shaped like a ship was hanging from the ceiling. There were hints of old world flair spread across the room: a large axe on the wall, and a horned helmet above the mantel.

Hiccup walked up the stairs. Jack heard a soft meowing. "Hey bud." Hiccup said, scooping up his cat, Toothless. He walked down the hall, towards the master bedroom. 'My clothes are probably too small, and Dad's might be too big.' He dug through his father's older things, looking for a shirt he accidentally shrunk. After finding a pair of sweats, Hiccup headed back to the living room.

"My Dad won't be back for a while, so you can!" Hiccup dropped the clothes. Jack had passed out, and was lying in the middle of the floor.

"Jack!" Hiccup grabbed him by the shoulders and shook him. "Jack wake up!" He felt for a pulse, and touched his forehead. "Well, at least you're breathing. You still have to get out of these clothes though."

Hiccup leaned Jack's head against the couch. He was out cold.

"Okay, I can do this." He began pulling Jack's hoodie over his head.

Toothless wandered into the room and began watching from the other sofa. "Mew?"

'This is perfectly normal.' Hiccup told himself. 'You are stripping down Jack Frost, local living legend. If he wakes up, you calmly explain that you are trying to help him, not molest him.'

With the hoodie off, Jack had on a wife-beater, underwear (most likely), pants, and socks.

Jack groaned as Hiccup took the undershirt off him, and Hiccup froze. "Uh..Jack! you're going to catch a cold in these clothes so!"

Jack cracked an eye open and looked at him for a moment before leaning his head back and closing his eyes. Hiccup frowned. 'Either

he's used to people undressing him or he just doesn't give a damn.'

His eyes rested on the silver buckle of Jack's belt. Hiccup bit his lip.

'Getting into Jack Frost's pants. This is definitely not what I planned to do with my Friday night.'

Eventually Hiccup mustered the courage to remove the rest of Jack's clothes, trying hard not to stare and looking as red as a tomato. When he was done putting Jack in his father's things, Hiccup grabbed sheets from the hall closet, a pillow off his own bed, and set up a pseudo bed on the couch. He half dragged Jack off the floor and onto the couch, tucking him in and turning the light off.

"This is what you do in this situation, right?"

Hiccup asked no one in particular, as he ascended the stairs.

Hiccup plopped onto his bed, exhausted. Toothless jumped onto the bed, kneading a spot on the comforter before curling up to sleep. Hiccup's eyes drooped. "I think you have the right idea Toothless." He tugged off his shirt and pants, got under the covers and drifted off.

Next chapter soon.

2. Chapter 2

Chapter two: Breakfast with Jack

"Ow!" Jack awoke to something landing on his chest. Sharp things poked him through sheets he didn't recognize. A large pair of green eyes were locked with his own. Eyes, Jack realized, that belonged to a cat and seemed more curious than menacing. Jack sat up, causing the cat the jump down and trot away.

"Whereâ€¦" Jack glanced around the room. Everything was vaguely familiar to him. He held his face in his hands, trying to remember what had happened last night. 'I was at the shopâ€¦and then I was at the park.' Hiccup's face flashed through his mind. "Freckles."

His voice was raspy. His forehead felt really hot. He untangled himself from the sheets. 'Is it just me, or is it way too hot in here?'

He stood and dragged himself into the kitchen, seeking water. Curious, he took a look inside the fridge. 'Wow, there's enough for a whole army in here.'

Soft footfalls descended the stairs, letting him know that 'Freckles' was awake.

Hiccup found Jack in the kitchen.

"Good morning." Jack said, rummaging through his pantry. "Man, I'm starving."

Toothless walked passed them, stopping in front of Hiccup for a scratch behind the ears.

"I must have really been out of it yesterday." Jack said. He stopped moving after he saw Hiccup take a fish filet and onions out of the fridge. "I don't even remember changing into this."

'Fish? For breakfast? That's so weirdâ€|'

"Uh, yeahâ€|changing." Hiccup's face reddened at that. He took several containers out of the cabinet. He rinsed a frying pan out and set it on the stove, all the while hoping his blushing didn't give away the previous night's events.

'Now is not the time to think about his boxer-briefsâ€|'

"So, not to be rude or anything." Jack cleared his throat. "But, uh, who are you?"

Hiccup stopped what he was doing. At first he looked shocked, but his face twisted into a annoyed stare. "Jackâ€|" Hiccup began, looking somewhat menacing as he brandished a knife. "I'm in your physics class. When you first heard my name, you laughed so hard you almost fell out of your chair."

"Ohâ€|" Jack scratched his head. 'I knew those freckles were familiarâ€|he has them on the back of his neck.'

Hiccup began to chop the onions. "I'm gonna say it once, and pray that you remember." He sighed and then said through clenched teeth, "It's Hic-cup-Had-dock." He enunciated each syllable with a chop.

Jack stifled a giggle. "Ah, I remember that now. Sorry Hic."

'Hic?' Hiccup shook his head. He dropped the seasoned fish and chopped onions into the pan. The sizzling noises made Jack's mouth water.

Toothless rubbed against their legs, walking in a crooked circle between the two of them.

"Are your parents around?" Jack asked. He picked up a apple.

"My Dad is at a match, so he wont be back."

"A match?"

"He's a wrestler." Hiccup replied, concentrating on fish. "That apple is fake."

"Oh." Jack stared at the counter. "Ohhh!" He exclaimed. "Your Dad is Stoick the vast, the hairy hooligan!" 'That explains the random old stuff.'

" I thought all the photos in the foyer and the title belt in the living room would be a dead giveaway." He frowned when Jack looked at him.

"Please don't give me that look."

"What look?"

"The, 'you guys look nothing alike face'."

" I was just wondering what having a wrestler for a Dad would be like."

Hiccup scratched his head. "Ohâ€¦"

Jack smiled. " I used to watch your Dad wrestle when I was a kid. Wait, didn't he retire?"

Hiccup turned the fire off. "He's a special guest."

Jack wandered closer in interest. "It's done?"

"Yup." Hiccup picked up the pan and began putting the dish into a bowl. Jack was about to ask for a plate when Hiccup put the bowl on the floor. Toothless ran over and stuck his face in it. Hiccup laughed and rubbed the cat's head. "Eat up buddy."

Jack deadpanned. "Wh-Whatâ€¦." 'All thatâ€¦for the cat?!'

"Now what should I have for breakfast?" Hiccup scratched his chin. "Oatmeal? Pancakesâ€¦"

"Pancakes!" Jack suddenly exclaimed, looking like a child on Christmas morning.

Hiccup bit his lip to stop himself from laughing. "Okay, we'll have pancakes." He cleaned the pan he just used and took a skillet from off the wall. "I don't have mix, so they'll be from scratch."

Jack's face glowed curiosity. "From scratch?"

"Uh huh. They come out pretty good, if I do say so myself. They're my mom's recipe."

Jack leaned on the counter. "Your momâ€¦was sheâ€¦?"

"Valhallarama the Viking queen, yes." Hiccup retrieved flour from the cupboard. "Can you pass me the eggs?"

Jack nodded and took the carton out of the fridge. "She was cool too. Ha, I knew they were together."

Hiccup began adding ingredients in a bowl. "You don't have any allergies do you?"

Jack shrugged. "Nope."

He handed Hiccup the carton. Their hands touched for a moment. Hiccup looked away from the food and grabbed Jack's hand. "Jack."

"What?" Jack blinked at him. "Why are you so cold?"

Hiccup frowned, his mouth pressed into a thin line. "You're burning up." He touched Jack's forehead.

Jack didn't move. 'That feels kinda nice'.

"Go sit." Hiccup commanded. 'I knew he was gonna get sick.'

"I'll be right back." With that, Hiccup headed upstairs. A moment later he returned with a thermometer.

"Say ahh." Hiccup said.

Jack opened his mouth, ready to make a remark, but Hiccup stuck the thermometer in, not wanting to hear it. Hiccup waited for the thermometer to beep. "Wait, I think this is the pet thermometer."

Jack spit out the object, just as it beeped. "What?!"

Hiccup retrieved the thermometer. "I was kidding." He read the output with a frown. "You have a fever, Jack."

"Oh!" Jack looked crestfallen. "Does this mean I don't get to have pancakes?"

Hiccup laughed at that, biting his lip when Jack began to frown. "You can still have pancakes." Hiccup went back to the kitchen, and Jack made himself comfortable on the couch. He flicked through tv channels before settling on a old movie. It wasn't long until a pleasant aroma wafted through the room, and Hiccup returned with two plates stacked high with pancakes.

He handed one to Jack and placed the other on a end table.

As Hiccup wandered off to get TV tables, Jack began to stuff his face.

'Holy! I think I'm in love!'

No one had ever made breakfast for him before. Well, North had attempted to do so several times, but Jack had never received food from a friend.

After they finished breakfast, Jack took a shower. 'The bathrooms are huge, the house is big! With a father like Stoick, it makes sense.'

Hiccup left Jack's things in the bathroom and retreated back to the kitchen. He washed the dishes, contemplating his current situation.

'Well, this has been a interesting weekend so far.'

Before this, he had only interacted with Jack a few times. The first was when he glared at Jack for laughing at his name. The second was when Jack had hit him in the head with his lacrosse stick. Jack had a habit of walking through the hallways with it on his shoulders, and hitting a lot of people with it. Hiccup had yelled at him then, but Jack, wrapped in a conversation with his girlfriend of the week, did not hear him. Any point of contact after that was when papers were being passed out in class. And come to think of it, why were they in class together?

Jack returned downstairs in his own clothes, happy to be back in his own things. "What now?"

"Huh?" Hiccup stared at him. "Well, I'm going to walk Toothless, soâ€¦"

Jack gave him a quizzical look. "You walk your cat?"

Hiccup raised an eyebrow. "Yeah, so?"

Jack looked away from him. "Uhâ€¦nothingâ€¦"

He glanced at a clock. "I should probably call North. Do you have a phone I could use?"

Hiccup handed him a cordless phone. "You don't have a cellphone?"

Jack shrugged. "I did, but I kinda lost it."

'Yeah I lost it alright. I threw it in the lake for crying out loud.' He dialed the number of North's personal line. It only took a moment for the man to pick up.

"Hey North."

"Jack!" North's voice boomed through the phone, causing Jack to pull away. "We have been lookink all night! Vere are you?"

Hiccup left the room.

"I'm at a friend's house. I'll be back soon."

"Your coach vas worried when you didn't go to practice." There was a touch of concern in North's voice. "Is everything okay Jack?"

Hiccup returned with Toothless and a small bag.

"Everything's great. I'll see you later." After hearing North's reply, he hung up.

"Well, I'm gonna go nowâ€¦" Hiccup said, headed for the door.

"Hang on a sec." Jack said putting the phone on its cradle. "I'll come with you."

Hiccup shook his head. "You're sick, Jack. I think you should sit still for awhile."

Jack crossed his arms. "So what I'm hearing is that you want to leave me all alone. What if something happens to me Hic?" There was false panic in his voice. "What if I fall and can't get up?"

Hiccup sighed. "Okay, fine." He put on his coat and a green skullcap. He took a brown scarf off the coat rack and handed it to Jack. "At least cover up your neck, and put on your hood."

Jack grinned in triumph and wrapped the scarf around his neck. It was warm and bore a pattern of Autumn leaves.

3. Chapter 3

I am back from japan and able to post.

Fair warning: This is not just a ROTBD fic. This is more of a Rise of the brave tangled dragons hotel Laika sponsored in part by Disney and Dreamworks. There will be random characters and movie references. EVERYWHERE.

The sixteenth year of Hiccup Haddock

Chapter 3: Walking with Jack

The sidewalks where Hiccup lived had been cleared of trotted ahead, unperturbed by the wet stuff. The sky was a calm grey mass of clouds. Hiccup and Jack walked in silence as Toothless tugged his master around.

Jack glanced around. They were surrounded by cookie cutter houses, all about two floors or more.

He had never seen the area before. Jack and North lived in a large apartment in downtown Berk, across the street from 's department store. Every morning Jack would get out of his four poster bed, cross his large blue room, and stare at his future workplace. A sense of dread often followed the stare, along with irritation and a sudden need to get as far away from the store as possible. He didn't dislike the place, or the workers, or North. It was the fact that everyone thought he'd be the next owner that he couldn't stand.

Toothless tugged sharply on his leash and began to run, pulling Hiccup with him. "Hey! Hang on a minute!" Hiccup pulled on the leash hard. It snapped and Toothless ran across the street, after a squirrel.

Hiccup ran after his cat. Jack ran after them. ' Is it a cat, or is it just a small dog?' Part of Toothless's tail was missing, leading people to believe he was a mix of Burmese and bobcat.

Hiccup picked up his cat, grumbling, and carried him back to the house. He put Toothless in the backyard, after giving the cat a lecture, which made Jack wonder considering that cat couldn't speak English. Jack returned to the living room. When Hiccup returned, he stood. "I should probably go homeâ€|" 'Even though I have no idea where I amâ€|'

"Okay." Hiccup replied.

Jack raked a hand through his hair. "I guess I'll see you at schoolâ€|.Speaking of school, I guess your commute is longer than mine." 'Take a hint will ya?'

"Yep." Hiccup looked at the clock. "Actually, I have to go there right now."

"On a Saturday?"

"We're working on the school mural." Hiccup took his wagon of supplies from the hall closet. "We're still in the draft phase, so

you can contribute, if you want."

"Sounds cool. I kinda wanna see what you guys have done." 'And it provides me with a landmark.'

Hiccup and Jack left the house again, this time for a much longer walk.

"Does your Dad go away often?" Jack asked. They had been walking for 20 minutes.

"No, not really. But he's a fan favorite, so he gets asked to go to events a lot."

"You ever go with him?"

"Sometimes." Hiccup smiled weakly then, his focus on the road.

After a few more blocks, they reached the park. Burgess park was large. It had its own pond, a small playground, a picnic area, and a event stage. They walked up a small hill and down a stone path that cut through the park, straight to the other exit.

Jack stuffed his hands into his pockets. His face was half covered with Hiccup's scarf. The cold didn't bother him as much as the sudden wind. He shivered.

"Are you alright Jack?" Hiccup asked. "I think you should go home, I don't think the cold is helping that fever."

"I'll sleep it off later." It seemed like Jack was determined to go with him. 'He can't be that interested in the mural, can he?'

They crossed several wide streets and went up a long hill to Burgess high. Burgess high school had a large, four story building with a field and parking spaces looking over a cliff. There was a small forest beneath the cliff. With the field just behind the school, Jack could hear the shouts of his coach in the distance. He felt a rush of happiness, feeling free from the drills and snow dusted field.

Hiccup looked at the parking lot. It was empty with the exception of two cars. "You know who owns that death trap?" Jack said, pointing to a beat-up forest green convertible. The car was dusty and dented, with boxes covering the backseat. "That car never seems to leave here."

"That's Ms. Ana's." Hiccup replied. "Her pride and joy."

Jack helped him carry the wagon up the short set of stairs outside the school. They entered and walked passed a old dozing bodyguard. Jack headed left, stopping in front of the elevator.

Hiccup dragged the wagon towards him. "Jaaaack, we can't use the elevator."

Jack pushed the "up" button, not looking at him. "Why?"

"We're students for one thing, and their's a custodian sitting in it."

"You worry too much." The elevator "dinged", signaling its arrival. The metal door slid open, revealing a tired looking old man in a office chair. The old man had a stern look on his face, his mouth pressed into a thin line.

"Heyyy, Peabody!" Jack stepped into the elevator. He grabbed Hiccup by the arm and dragged him inside.

The old man raised a frail, trembling hand in front of the number pad.

"Hiccup, what floor are we headed to?"

"Top floor." Hiccup replied.

The old man groaned and pressed four.

After a short ride chock full of awkward silence, Jack and Hiccup continued their journey the art room.

"So why are you bringing supplies to the meeting?"

"The door is sometimes locked, so we take turns bringing supplies."

They walked down a corridor, the walls decorated with work from several art classes. Finally they came to the end of the hall. Sunlight streaked in through a stain glass window. Voices could be heard from the double doors before them. One chatted adamantly while three others chimed in occasionally. Jack held the door while Hiccup pulled the wagon inside.

The art room, dubbed the gallery by the art teachers, was full of covered easels all posed in a semi-circle around a small stage meant for models. There was a cupboard full of smocks, and several tables covered in props sitting in various corners.

The art teacher, Ms. Ana, stood in the model space while three students sat on stools in front of her. Her eccentricity was made evident by her appearance, hair in a ombrÃ© of green, magenta contacts, and a green gown that swept the floor.

The students in front of her had appearances that were just as memorable, if not somewhat subdued in comparison. One girl had short black hair, pale skin, and blue eyes. She wore a black jumper and sat with a sketchbook in her lap. She glanced at Hiccup for a moment, and then stared at Jack in surprise. The second girl was fair skinned with emerald eyes. She had long, long hair that was golden like the sun. She wore a violet jumper and was scribbling notes in a sun-shaped notepad. She gave them a wave as they came in.

Hiccup dragged the wagon closer. "Hi, sorry I'm late."

"Hiccup!" Miss Ana looked excited to see him. But then, she usually looked excited "Oh look, you brought a friend!"

"Yeahâ€¦Guys this is Jackâ€¦Jack, this is Mavis-"

"We know each other." The raven haired girl said.

Hiccup looked between Jack and Mavis for a moment.

"We're neighbors." Jack explained. Mavis's Dad runs the hotel across from 's."

"Not to mention", Mavis added. "We dated in junior high school., and off and on since last year."

"Yeah.." Jack chuckled nervously. "That tooâ€|"

He looked away.

Hiccup rubbed his arm. 'Well that was awkwardâ€|. ' "And this is Rapunzel."

The other girl stood. "Hi Jack!" She directed her attention to Hiccup. "Hiccup, did you bring the revisions?"

"Uh huh." Hiccup pulled a portfolio off the wagon. "Got it."

"Let's take a look at the drafts again." said.

Mavis was confused. "But Miss, I thought we already decided."

"We did." Ms. Ana said smiling. "But humor me. I want to see which one Jack prefers."

Jack scratched his head. "Which what now?"

"All four of us created sketches for the mural. I want to see which one you pick."

"Oh." Jack tugged at Hiccup's scarf. Hiccup wandered over to a corner and took off his jacket. "I'm sure they're all really goodâ€|"

"Mhmmâ€|" rummaged through a cardboard box on the floor and pulled out four pieces of paper. She handed them to Jack, who reluctantly began to look them over. Each was unique, with its kind of charm. However, out of all of them, only one was painted. The piece depicted the school from above with a invisible roof, giving a look into several rooms. There students studying, snacking, and sleeping in class. There were cheerleaders practicing in gym, friends watching from thee sidelines. Lacrosse players ran down the hall, carrying a large trophy. Dancers practiced in one room, while artists sketched in another. By the front door, graduates were headed out. Outside the school there was a line of people from various professions walking away. There were tiny things hidden in all the rooms, and little symbols along the borders. The school motto, "Keep moving forward", was drawn above the school.

"This one." Jack said. "It has a little bit of everything in it. Thee colors are nice too."

"See!" looked ecstatic. "It's unanimous!"

Rapunzel turned a bright shade of red. "That doesn't prove anything! Jack is probably just being nice!"

"Rapunzel thinks her artwork isn't that good." Hiccup said. "She though we were joking when we picked hers."

"But it is good." Jack replied, looking at Rapunzel.

Rapunzel shook her head. "It's full of mistakes."

"Are you kidding? I couldn't draw this well in a million years!"

"That settles it!" said. "No more revisions! We're moving forward with Rapunzel's!"

Hiccup sighed. "Finally."

I need feedback. Oh, what animal should I use for the school team? Heffalumps?

Updating soon. Look, Rapunzel is here!

4. Chapter 4

Hello again. Did everyone see the HTTYD2 trailer? Yes? Well, we have a year to go...

I'm very proud of myself, I got a few references hidden in here! And another Disney character!

Chapter 4: Dressing with Jack

"So it's decided, we'll go ahead with Rapunzel's. First we'll do a few revisions. At our next meeting, I want everyone to bring something that they wish to incorporate into the picture." Ms. Ana went off on a tangent, and after an hour of her speech everyone said their goodbyes.

Hiccup and Jack snuck out first, Hiccup first retrieving his things and passing the wagon rights onto Rapunzel, and Jack following him out. "The school mural looks like it's going to be nice." Jack said, looking ahead. "It almost looked like everyone would be in it. That reminds me..." Jack wrapped the scarf tighter around his neck. "You are coming to my birthday party right? I mean, I basically invited the whole school."

"Your birthday party?" Hiccup repeated. "I don't remember being invitedâ€¦?"

"Huh..." Jack shrugged. "Well, now you are."

Hiccup scratched his head. He bit his bottom lip, cheeks filling with air and embarrassment.

"Well, its just kinda sudden. I mean, I didn't even get you anything."

Jack shook his head. "Trust me, its not that kind of birthday party."

"Hey Hiccup!"

>Hiccup turned back to see Rapunzel tugging the wagon towards them.<p>

"Oh hey Rapunzel."

Rapunzel reached them and tugged the wagon to her left. She brushed several strands of hair out of her face. "Can I sign you up for the next bake sale? I need a list of at least ten people, or the student council won't let me have the space."

"Uh, sure. When is the next bake sale anyway?" Hiccup asked.

"Really?" Rapunzel's eyes lit up then, in a way Jack had seen many times before. "The sale is right after the holidays." She reached in her magenta messenger bag, dug out a folded piece of copy paper and handed him a pen.

Hiccup glanced at the list. 'No one else has signed this...' He clicked the pen and signed his name, then handed the paper back to Rapunzel. She looked as if she would jump for joy. Then she did. "Oh, thank you Hiccup!"

She dashed past both of them, and turned to wave. "See you in English!" With that she ran into the stairwell.

Hiccup waved back, his hand dropping as she disappeared from view.

Jack snickered. "Wow."

Hiccup narrowed his eyes at him. "What?"

Jack fingered the leaves on the scarf. He looked Hiccup in the eye. "You like her?"

Hiccup's eyes widened. "What? No!" He paled a little then, causing Jack to laugh.

"Why?" Jack asked between laughs. "What, she's not your type?"

Hiccup looked away. "Well..." He turned slightly pink. "Yeah...she's not...I don't think of her that way."

Jack shoved his hands into his pockets. "Oh, that's a shame, 'cause I'm pretty sure she likes you."

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "I think that fever is cooking your brain."

Jack wiggled his eyebrows. "Trust me, I know these things."

Hiccup patted him on the arm. "I bet you do." 'I can't tell if he's joking or not...And he does have quite the track record when it comes to relationships. I've probably seen him with a dozen girls, but never...'

"So, you went out with Mavis?" Hiccup said, changing topic.

"Yeah, back in junior high." Jack sighed. "It was a big deal downtown. Our fathers thought we were going to get married and expand the businesses, Hotel Tartakovsky and North's. We kept it up for a while until like, sophomore year."

They reached the elevator. Mr. Peabody was still sitting inside looking unimpressed.

"Heyyy Peabody." Jack waved at him and then wobbled into the elevator.

"Are you alright, Jack?"

"Just peachy."

Despite his answer, Jack was swaying the entire ride.

After the elevator hit the ground floor, Jack got out and headed for the front door in silence.

"Jack?" Hiccup said, trailing after him. He was beginning to worry. 'Maybe I should have told him to go home...'

Jack stepped outside and sighed in relief. The building had been too warm for him, and the cold arm, wrapped around him like a giant icepack.

He smiled. "Ah, that's better."

A sudden gust of wind cause Hiccup to grip his shoulders. "The cold? It's freezing."

"It's perfect."

They descended the hill, Jack wobbling and Hiccup watched him with worry.

'If he doesn't stop wobbling, I'm going to start calling him weeble.'

"So what kind of party is it?"

"A Gatsby party." Jack smiled then. "Formal attire, and we're taking over Hotel Tartakovsky."

"I doubt I have anything nice enough to wear to that. When your Dad is a wrestler, your clothes mostly consist of graphic tees and jeans. You know, comfortable convention wear."

>Jack rubbed his hands. "That's not a problem. Come on, we'll go find something."<p>

Hiccup stopped then.

"Oh...kay."

Jack continued down the hill. 'Well, there go my legs. Oh well, at least I'm still walking...'

Jack lead the way to North's. The department store was a spectacular sight, already decorated for holidays. Colorful displays adorned the

shop windows. Manikins wore the latest styles, and adults and children alike stopped to admire the windows. 's was several stories high, a prominent member of the downtown Burgess scene. Jack waltzed through the brass turning doors.

Hiccup sneezed instantly. They walked straight into the cloud of perfume known as the cosmetics section. Clerks spritzed perfume and cologne at passerby, screeching about deals and current offers. Hiccup clamped a hand over his nose and followed Jack through the haze away from the exotic fragrances and through the shoe section. There, egos were stroked as young shop girls persuaded women and men alike into buying shoes of every style.

Several glanced in Jack's direction, and Jack gave a nod each time, but none of them ceased in their efforts to sell shoes.

They crossed the marble floor and Jack hopped on the half wooden, half metal escalator. Jack kept his eyes upward as they ascended, while Hiccup took a moment to admire the store. He never spent much time in North's but he had to admit it had a certain air about it. It was almost like stepping back in time.

The workers were all in uniform, all polite and polished. Customers were given only respect and compliments, regardless of there social status or upbringing. The store itself seemed more like a mansion then a shopping hub. Comfortable couches were all over, golden chandelier were hanging from the ceiling, and the white marble floors had swirls of a gold glittering substance. Easy listening was being pumped in through speakers, but set at such a volume that it only helped the shopping experience.

Before Hiccup realized it, he had followed Jack up two flights to the Men's section. Soon, they were surrounded by a sea of suits. Jack noticed a pudgy man with sandy colored hair drifting towards the elevator and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Hey, Sandy!"

The man gave him a nod and a friendly wave.

"I need some help. My friend here needs a concierge. Who's on duty? Lumiere?"

The man identified as Sandy nodded. He took a dazed Hiccup by the hand and had him sit on on couch in front of the dressing room area. Sandy then walked away. Jack plopped onto the other end of the sofa, loosening the scarf around his neck. In an instant a spindly man appeared in front of them in a cream and brown suit. His hair was pulled back into a ponytail. His look was further accented by his cravat, and amber pin, resembling a flame.

"Monsieur Jack! Sanderson tells me you have a friend in need of..." His eyes wandered over Hiccup's from. "Help."

"Hi Lumiere." Jack gave him a friendly wave, but didn't stand. "We need a suit."

Lumiere rubbed his chin., looking Hiccup up and down. "I am sure I can do somezing about...this."

Hiccup crossed his arms defensively. "You just gestured to all of me."

Lumiere nodded. "Yes...I can fix it."

My image of North's is based on the many department stores I have seen. I live in NYC, so I go to shops like Macy's and Lord and Taylor's...but I always wanted to see shops pf past days like Abraham and Strauss. I got a good glimpse when I went to Daimaru in japan...Now that is a cool department store. GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER MACYS.

5. Chapter 5

I lost my internet for two weeks. Pfft. I apologize.

Chapter 5: Partying with Jack

Lumiere rubbed his chin., looking Hiccup up and down."I am sure I can do somezing about...this."

Hiccup crossed his arms defensively. "You just gestured to all of me."

Lumiere nodded. "Yes...I can fix it."

Lumiere looked at a rack of blazers. "I will go find a few pieces. Please, wait here."

Hiccup rubbed his arm. "..."

Jack chuckled. He pulled a Fedora off a stand next to the couch and placed it on his head. "Just let Lumiere do his thing. He's never been wrong when it comes to helping a guest."Lumiere walked around the area, occasionally glancing at Hiccup and picking up more pieces of clothing.

"He's the best in the men's department, I swear." Jack slid down farther into the sofa and covered his face with the hat. "I just hope you didn't have anything else to do today."

Hiccup couldn't hear Jack 's voice clearly, as it was muffled by the hat. "What was that?"

Lumiere returned with a entire rack of clothing. "Now, I 'ave collected several outfits monsieur. Do you see anything you like?"

Hiccup looked the rack over. There were pantsuits and blazers and vests in various fabrics, along with shirts in colors from off-white to cream.

"It's all pretty nice...Much nicer than my usual wardrobe anyway."

Jack moved the hat from his face and sat up. "Ah, you're back Lumiere."The warm atmosphere of the shop was making Jack relax. He often felt more at home in the store than he did in his own. Jack slid off the couch. He began to look through the rack. "This one is

nice...This is good too..."

He pressed a tweed jacket against Hiccup. "Ha ha, this one makes you look like Mister Rogers..."

Hiccup rolled his eyes, and then did a double take when he saw the price on the jacket.

"I hate to break it to you, but I don't think I can afford any of this."

Jack shrugged. "So?"

"So...I can't wear any of it."

Jack laughed. "Of course you can old sport!" He pulled several articles off the rack. "All you have to do is 'borrow' it. You have a credit card, right?"

"Yeah...for emergencies."

"Monsieur, consider this a fashion emergency." Lumiere added a pile of ties and a bowtie to the clothes Jack was holding. "Simply make the purchase today, keep the clothes clean, and return zem after Jack's party."

Jack handed Hiccup a cream colored shirt, the bow tie, a dark chocolate vest, and a pair of pants. "Here, try this."

Hiccup reluctantly took the clothes and Lumiere lead him into the dressing room.

Alone in the small dressing cubby, Hiccup took a moment to observe himself. His hair was messier than usual, and he was missing two button on his coat. 'I can kinda see what Lumiere is seeing now.' He took off his coat and placed it on a hook on the wall. 'But seriously, what am I doing?'

Hiccup began tugging his shirt over his head. 'What is this? Karma? Does it work that way? You pick up a guy in the snow and he follows you around?'

He tried on the shirt. 'Maybe this is just a setup for some big joke. Let's face it, I haven't made any real friends my age in this town since I got here.' He sighed then, leaning his head on the glass. It was cold. He watched his breath on it for a moment. 'Who am I kidding?'

"Hey Hic!" Jack's voice carried from outside the dressing room. "You done?"

"J-Just a minute!" Hiccup called back. 'I'll consider this a one week friendship...A temporary thing. Jack just wants to pay me back. After the party, we'll probably never talk to each other again...' Hiccup changed into the pant and slid the vest on. He didn't bother buttoning it, and grabbed the bow tie.

Jack gave him a appraising look. "Well, you don't get the full effect like this." He stepped closer.

"..." Hiccup looked up at him. 'Just a temporary thing...'

Jack began buttoning the vest. "That's better."

Hiccup looked away, uncomfortable with the close contact. 'It doesn't mean anything.'

"And the bow tie?" Jack held up his hand.

Hiccup handed him the bowtie.

Jack undid the tie's snap and laughed. 'This is actually from the kid's collection.'

Hiccup glanced at Jack's face. There was that carefree smile he had seen many times in the hallway, after class, and on after the few lacrosse games he attended. Having it focused in his direction made him feel a little uneasy. Maybe it wasn't just a temporary thing. Maybe Jack actually wanted to hang out with him. But then, why would that be? He wasn't anything special...

"Perfect." Jack was pleased. "Do you have shoes?"

"Yeah..." 'I do actually.'

"Good, then we're done! That took a lot less time than I thought it would."

Hiccup laughed nervously. "I guess."

Jack's hand lingered on his shoulder then, causing Hiccup to look in the eye. And what eyes Jack had. A crystal blue that could not be manufactured. Hiccup found himself staring. 'Who has eyes this blue? It's kinda unreal...' But then, Hiccup was never that close to someone to know if there were more crystal-blue eyed people out there. Human contact was not something Hiccup experienced frequently.

Hiccup had become a little more quiet when they had entered North's, and that bothered Jack somewhat. Most people treated Jack differently when he was inside North's. They always wanted discounts or freebies. The fact that Hiccup hadn't asked for anything surprised him. Still Hiccup looked pretty uncomfortable. HE glanced down at Hiccup. He cleaned up pretty well, The bow-tie brought out the color in his eyes. Which on closer inspection, Jack noticed were a mossy green with small flecks of gold. He had never seen eyes like his before, and could only recall a similar description from a YA novel he had glanced at long were different, yet very fitting for Hiccup. Just like that mass of freckles spread across his face, that scar on his chin, the perplexed look in his eyes.

Jack dropped his hand from Hiccup's shoulder and cleared his throat. "So...I guess we're done."

Hiccup rubbed the back of his neck, feeling self-conscious. "Yeah..."

In what felt like seconds Hiccup bought the clothes, said his goodbyes, and began his journey back through the park. A light drizzle came down from the heavens, and was replaced with more snow. By the time he reached his house, the area was covered in white.

'Oh shoot...the scarf...' He took off his coat and boots, went to let toothless in from the backyard and headed to his room.

"I dodged a bullet today toothless." Hiccup said as he sat at his desk. There was a large open cardboard box on it, upside down. "We picked Rapunzel's work instead of mine."

Toothless tilted his head and hopped up onto Hiccup's bed.

"I don't mind working on the wall, but I really didn't think my stuff was good. Besides..." Hiccup lifted the cardboard box. "This is what I want to work on." Hidden under the box was miniature village. Tiny houses and figurines covered the desk. To the left of the town sat a set of dragons of different shapes and sizes. Hiccup had been building the island of Berk since before he moved from Berk. What started as a little house made of legos, became a whole town made of wood, plastic and metal. Hiccup had even gone as far as to use a 3D printer to make his dragons.

At the moment, he was still in the process of sketching The Night Fury, the most elusive of all the dragons he had created, and the hardest to draw. He wasn't sure what features to give the magnificent beast. He sat on his bed with his sketchbook and stared at the little world from a distance. With toothless at his side, Hiccup pondered on the mysterious Night Fury for the rest of his weekend.

That Monday Hiccup walked into school feeling gloomy. 'Here goes.' he thought to himself as he stood outside of Physics. 'Moment of truth. Jack will probably treat like he did before, I'll return the suit, get the scarf, and we can go back to our normal lives.'**

>

But Hiccup did not see Jack that day, or the following one. After school, Hiccup came home to find Stoick rummaging through the pantry.

"Oh, uh, Hey Dad."

He received a grunt in response and something along the lines of "_Hellow Heccup_."

"So..How did it go?" Hiccup asked, pouring himself a cup of tea. Hiccup already knew how the fight went as he had watched it on Pay-per-View, but he wanted a first hand account.

"Same old, same old." Stoick replied, taking leftovers out of the fridge. "What's for dinner Heccup?"

"Oh uh, I dunno..What do you feel like Dad?"

Stoick shrugged. "I don't know, something with fish?"

Considering their Scandinavian heritage, _something with fish_ was a vague as his father could get. But, Hiccup shrugged it off and went the fridge.

"Well, we have cod, and salmon...and several other fi-You know what, I'll just pull something together."

Hiccup got to work on dinner then, and after a hour and half of work, they sat down for a dinner of Gravlox, smoked ham, dill, radishes, knackebrod, and roasted beets. It was comfort food for his father, as Stoick missed the meals he could regularly have in Berk. It was a quiet meal, as the only noises were the scraping of forks and spoons.

"So..." Stoick began suddenly, causing Hiccup to look up from his plate. "I see you purchased some things from North's."

"Yeah..." Hiccup laughed nervously then. 'And of course you would know that...Because the bank sends you notifications...'

"I didn't mean to pry, but it stuck out between all the groceries and the, er...hobby stuff."

Hiccup knew the 'hobby stuff' meant his material for his village, and pretended not to hear the tone in his father's voice.

"So...You have a date coming up?"

Hiccup set down his fork. "What? N-No, Dad I just bought that stuff because-"

"A friend of mine told me the school dance is coming up.."

"Well this isn't for that Dad, this is for-"

"I remember when I was your age...Young, strapping thing I was..A boy yer age doesn't get dressed up for just anyone..."

"That's the thing Dad, it's not just anyone, but it's what you think, because it's a party-"

"I suppose it's about tie some lass has caught yer eye..."

"I guess but this isn't..." hiccup sighed "...nevermind."

Stoick went on into a tale of his own adventure as a young man, while Hiccup stared at his radishes.

Hiccup didn't see Jack for the rest of the week, that is, until Friday. It was early morning. hiccup had just finished eating breakfast and cleaning up the kitchen. He heard a horn honk outside. It seemed like some irate driver was trying to get someone's attention. Hiccup ignored the noise, grabbed his stuff and headed out the door.

"Hey! Hiccup!"

Hiccup blinked. "Oh..."

It wasn't a irate driver. It was Jackson Overland, sitting in a new Mercury Milan.

"North got me a early birthday present."

Hiccup stepped up to the car. "That's great..."

Jack had his signature smile out in full force. "Well, don't just stare at it, get in!"

Hiccup crossed over to the passenger side and got into the car. The seats were warm and made of he held his backpack in his lap, Hiccup could only wonder what strange fantasy world he had slipped into. He looked over at Jack, who was once again wearing the autumn scarf. Jack revved up the engine and headed for school. He wasn't exactly speeding, but the scenery was going by a little too fast for Hiccup's taste.**
>

"I know it's that that far from here but..." Jack made a turn onto another street. 'I'll take any reason to drive this thing that I can get."

Hiccup looked out the window. "Hey, Jack, do you have a permit or a license?"

"Permit." Jack replied.

"Don't you need a adult in the car?"

"Hiccup, how old are you?"

"Sixteen."

"Good, I'm seventeen." Jack said, keeping his eyes on the road. "We've got 33 years of experience between us. We'll be fine."

Hiccup fastened his seat-belt. 'Great Odin, what have I done?'

To Hiccup's delight they made it to Burgess high in one piece. Jack's parking was in need of work, but assured Hiccup he would get better with practice. Hiccup simply nodded at that, but wanted to be as far away from his 'practice' as possible. As they trudged up the steps towards Burgess high, Hiccup tapped Jack on the shoulder.

"Hey...Jack.."

"Hm?"

"There's something I need..."

The smile fell from Jack's face then. They had been getting along so well. But Jack knew it was never too long before someone asked him for something. What would it be this time? Money?A date with a girl? A discount? Hiccup was just like everyone else...

"Can I have my scarf back please?"

Jack blinked. 'Well, bang goes that theory.' "Do I have to give it back? I mean, it's so warm...and comfy...I couldn't find one like it either."

Hiccup's shoulders drooped. "It was my Mom's..I mean, she made it,so there's not gonna be another one like it..." He dug the heel of his left boot further into the snow. "Please?"

Hiccup looked helpless then, like a kicked puppy. Jack felt like a remorseful bully.

"Alright man." Jack slowly removed the long scarf from around his neck. The cold air made him shiver.

He handed it to Hiccup, who looked relieved instantly.

Hiccup smiled. "Thank you."

"..." 'His smile is a bit crooked...' Jack thought. 'But I think it suits him.'

Before Hiccup realized it, it was Saturday night, and he was headed to Hotel Tartakovsky. Jack hadn't showed up top the mural meeting, but Hiccup figured he probably had other things to attend to. Rapunzel had come quite far in revisions, and the work had been divided up, so Jack would have no reason to come anymore. He made the effort to leave while Stoick was at the gym, so as not to receive anymore 'helpful date tips'. When he arrived at the hotel, other kids from his school and one he didn't recognize were entering the building. He entered after them, and unlike most of them, carried a small gift. The small cluster walked through the hotel's main lobby, dropped their coats at the overly large holding room, which Hiccup couldn't help but stare at, and they entered the main ballroom. The space was large an filled with noise.

'Wow...when he said a 'Gatsby party, he meant it.'

A live band was playing jazz, amplified by speakers and bouncing off the walls. Hiccup was pretty sure the entire school, and maybe two others were there. He spotted Mavis and tried to call to her, but was drowned out by the noise. He did get her attention however, when a nearby jock grabbed his present and started playing catch with it.

She walked over. "HEY!"

The two boys disappeared into the crowd. Hiccup shook his head and looked back at her. "Hey, Mavis."

"Glad to see you could make it." She smiled at him. "Now there are two sensible people at this party."

She shook her head. "Speaking of which, have you seen Jack?"

Hiccup shook his head. "No..."

Mavis smiled. "Them, do you mind helping me find him? He disappeared right after the party started."

Hiccup rubbed his arm. "Uh...sure." He glanced around. Aside from the spacious floor, there was a staircase leading to a higher dining area. Hiccup could see a door leading to a balcony. 'I bet I could see better up there...' "I'll meet you by the staircase in twenty minutes."

"Cool. Thanks."

Hiccup slowly made his way through the room and up the stairs. He

surveyed the party from above.

'Yep. Definitely a Gatsby party.' He pinched himself. 'Nope. This craziness is all real.' Aside from the jazz band and pool, there was an ostrich on a table on the far right side of the room. Two boys were drowning themselves in a chocolate fountain. He also saw Ms. Ana scolding them about it. Even from high up, he could tell she was complaining about the health of their teeth. He chuckled and shook his head. A tinkling of glass caught his attention. 'Sounds like someone is on the balcony...'

Hiccup walked out onto the balcony, the cold night air hit him like a ton of bricks. Sitting on the ground was Jack. He was wearing a white pantsuit with silver cuff-links, a dark grey shirt, a brown vest and a yellow tie. The tinkling Hiccup had heard was a broken champagne glass. Jack's hair was slightly disheveled, he raked a hand through it, eyes resting on Hiccup.

"Huh..." Hiccup took a step back. "Well, you seem like you want to be alone, so I think I'll just-"

"No."

"Huh?"

>"I don't think I should be alone right now."<p>

"Oh..." Hiccup rubbed his arms. "Alright..."

Hiccup leaned against the door. Jack turned his attention back to the nighttime scene of downtown Burgess. Hiccup watched puffs of breath move in front of his face.

"Aren't you cold, Jack?"

"No." Jack's voice sounded strained, as if he had been yelling for hours. He smiled. "I'm Jack Frost, remember?"

Hiccup laughed nervously. "Yeah, right. But I don't think this is good for the cold you had the other."

>He heard the clacking of heels. Mavis came up behind him, arms crossed. "There you are. Come down and get your party under control."<p>

Jack glanced at Mavis, as if making sure she was actually there. "No Mavis-wavy, don't frown. You'll mess up that pretty face."

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAnd done. Thank you. See you soon. Sorry for the delay, but...no internet...so...yeah. Review?

6. Chapter 6

These typos I'm noticingâ€¦. They scare me. Anyone willing to Beta?

>P.S. In case you were wondering, Stoick saying 'Heccup' is not a typo.<p>

Stalking with Jack

Hiccup blinked. In about five minutes, Jack had gone through a complete transformation. Gone was the slightly disheveled mess he had found on the balcony. Jack returned to the party at Mavis's command and became the Jack that Hiccup knew a little better: the center of attention. He was chatting or dancing with anyone near him. Hiccup watched from a small distance. The only thing keeping him from becoming a wallflower was Jack pulling him back into conversation.

>Hiccup pulled gently at his bowtie. 'Well, I showed up. I suppose I could just sneak away the next time he dances with someone.'

"Hi, Hiccup!"

Hiccup turned to see Rapunzel looking slightly nervous.

>"Oh, hey Rapunzel."
Rapunzel wasn't exactly dressed for the party, and wearing a purple messenger bag. "I was picking something up for my Mother at St. North's when Mr. North told me to stop by Jack's party." She played with a strand of hair. "I've never been to one of these before." She bit her lip. "I don't even recognize anyone!"

>Hiccup rubbed his arm. "Yeah, I know the feeling."
"Hey! Goldie!" Jack was back and slightly inebriated.

>"Glad you could make it!" The smile slipped off his face. "Wait a second!"
At this point Hiccup wasn't sure which Jack was present.

>Mavis made her way to the trio. "Hey Rapunzel!" She patted Jack's arm and whispered something into his ear.
Jack disappeared then, off into the crowd.

>"What happened?" Hiccup asked.
Mavis shook her head. "Damage control. North is coming after the store closes, and Jack has to start killing the party."

>Rapunzel looked around. "Kill the party? You mean it's gonna end soon?"
Mavis shook her head. "Not exactly. He's gonna speed things up. This should be over by midnight."

>"Gosh that's late." Just then Rapunzel's bag shook, her phone vibrating. She pulled it out and her eyes widened at the sight of the number. "Mother." Her voice was barely a whisper. Terror spread across her face. "I gotta go! I'll see you guys after break!" With that she dashed away, out of the ballroom.
'Guess she's got a curfew.' Hiccup thought, shrugging at Mavis's puzzled stare. "So how is he going to speed this up?"

>Mavis smiled. "Watch and see."
As it turned out, 'speeding the party up' involved a zebra, a karaoke machine, and Mavis's father throwing a fit. By midnight the party had cleared out with the exception of Hiccup, who stayed behind to help with cleanup. The janitor staff moved like zombies, trudging around the room. Jack had fallen asleep twice holding his broom and Mavis and her father were having a hushed argument in the corner.

>"Hey." Hiccup said, shaking Jack's arm.
"Hm?" Jack blinked a few times. "Hey, Hic."

>"We only have a little more to go." He held up his broom. "I'll race you."
Jack smiled then, the genuine smile, not the drunken one he had worn for the last few hours. "Sure thing man."

>Jack and Hiccup shoveled trash across the room, fixing it all into a huge heap near the entrance.
It was three races later when Jack slid into the heap, laughing hysterically as he crashed. Hiccup offered him a hand and Jack took it, yanking hard and pulling Hiccup down into the mess. Caught off guard, Hiccup stared at Jack for a moment. He was partially on Jack's lap, one hand steadying him and the other in the garbage. He couldn't help but crack a smile, there

was something strangely infectious about Jack's laughter. Mavis was laughing too, and her father was shaking his head, but smiling all the while.

>"Heccup!"
Hiccup jumped, standing upright. He definitely hadn't been expecting to see his father step into the room. Stoick didn't look too happy either.

>"Do you have any idea what time it is?" Stoick towered over Jack and Hiccup.
The sight of the pro wrestler sobered Jack up quickly. 'Oh crapâ€|It's the Hairy Hooliganâ€|'

>"Hey Dad. Sorry, I kind of lost track of time."
Stoick wore a look of disapproval Hiccup had seen many times hung his head. Soon a speech chock full of disappointment and peppered with moments from Stoick's past would pass from the hooligan's mouth to his son's ears.

>Hiccup prepared himself for the speech, but it stopped due to a sudden stream of people and a large cake. The day crew of St. North's had turned up, singing 'Happy Birthday' and pushing a cake into the room.
As the song came to an end, Jack blew out the candles and everyone applauded.

>North emerged from the small crowd and pulled Jack out of the crowd. "Happy Birthday! Did you enjoy your party?"
Jack dusted himself off. "Yeah, it was great. Thanks a lot."

>"Haddock! What are you doing here?" North said, glancing at Stoick.
"North." Stoick said, turning his attention from his son. "Ah. I was looking for my son, Heccup." He patted Hiccup on the head. "Found him."

>"So this is the Hiccup that Jack has told me about." North laughed and shook Hiccup's hand, along with the rest of his body. "Nice to meet you."
Hiccup looked North over. Never before had he seen a man as formidable as his father. 'He's like Santa on steroids or something.'

>"I hope you will both be coming to our Christmas party."
"Funny you should mention that." Stoick said and looked at his son. "I was going to keep it a surprise, but Heccup and I are headed back down to Berk for the holidays."

>Hiccup was surprised. "We are?"
Stoick nodded.

>True, they had visited Berk a few times since they moved to Burgess, but it was usually on the way to something else. Hiccup supposed it would be a good thing for his father to go home. His only concern was how Toothless would adapt to where they would stay.
"Awâ€|" Jack returned to them, holding a plate of cake. "I was totally hoping we could swap presents at the party."

>"That's okay." North shook his head. "You come to New Year's gala instead."
Stoick stroked his massive beard. "I'm not sure-"

>"We'll be back by then, right Dad?"
"I guess." Stoick sighed. "We leave in two days."

>"It's settled then." Jack said. "Now let's eat cake."<p>

Soon Hiccup was sitting in the back of his Father's Buick, and the two of them were headed home. Toothless was scratching at the door when they returned.

>"I wasn't expecting you to stay out so late, Heccup." Stoick said, as he hung up his coat.
Hiccup nodded. "I know. I'm sorry, Dad. I didn't know the party would last so long. But I did leave a note and dinner in the kitchen."

>Stoick nodded. "That you did." He walked down the short hall, towards the stairs. "Well, you've got two days to get packed and say yer goodbyes. We'll be in Berk from the 23rd to the 30th."
"Where are we staying?" Hiccup asked. He scooped Toothless up into his arms.

>"With my brother."
Hiccup cringed. 'That meansâ€|A week with Snoutlout.'

>"Ohâ€|Joy."<p>

Hiccup lay in bed that night, or rather morning, staring at the ceiling. His brain was buzzing from all the sugar in Jack's birthday cake. Toothless was curled up in a ball on his stomach. 'Jack did it again today. I wonder what's wrong.'

>"I was totally hoping we could swap presents at the party."

>'Jack sounded like he was actually excited when he said that. I suppose I could pick out something for him. Or make something before I go.' His eyes rested on the model village on his desk. 'Maybe not something like thatâ€|'
He closed his eyes. 'I've got a day to figure this out.'

Hiccup set out the next morning to find ideas for a Christmas present, along with souvenirs for family and friends in Berk. It was snowing once again, covering Burgess in a layer of frost. Hiccup's first stop was the strip mall on the other side of Burgess. He was in a crafting mood, and figured that walking around the hobby shop would give him some ideas.

>The Burgess hobby shop was a full of knick knacks and kits to make almost anything. Hiccup went there often to pick up pieces for his village. He walked up and down the aisles, stopping for a moment in the canvas section. There he found Rapunzel trying to pick up a 11 x 17 canvas while trying to hold three rolls of yarn. "Oh hey Hiccup." She dropped a roll. "Oh, darn it."
"Let me help you with that." He picked up the roll. "What's the yarn for?"

>"Oh, I'm going to make a sweater for my Mother."
He noticed several bruises on her hand. "Did something happen to you?"

>"What?" She jumped, dropping the other rolls. "Oh darn it!"
Hiccup grabbed the other rolls.

>"Did you hurt yourself?"
"Yeah." Rapunzel tucked a strand of hair behind her ear. "Clumsy me."

>"Is it hard? Knitting, I mean. My mom showed me when I was little, butâ€|"
Rapunzel shook her head. "Oh no, it's actually easier than you think. Especially if you know a little about it already. They sell a great beginner's kit here. In no time at all you can learn how to make mittensâ€|or a scarf."

>"A scarf huh." It wasn't a bad idea. Jack liked his mother's scarf. Why not give him his own? "I'll think I'll try that, thanks."
"You're welcome." She looked at the ground. "I can help youâ€|if you want."

>Hiccup smiled. "That would be great actually. Thanks."
Rapunzel led Hiccup to a aisle of needles and yarn. She picked up a book.

"Here's a good beginners guideâ€|Oh! And here is the beginner's kit I told you about."

>"Too bee honest, this was a last minute decision, and I'm a little strapped for time. Can you show me a few pointers?"
"Sure. We can stop by the library. They have books with easy patterns."

>"Sounds like a plan."
Rapunzel and Hiccup spent two hours in the library, sitting on beanbags in a corner. The Burgess library was a old red brick building that stood two stories high. It was quiet and warm and full of people trying to escape the cold. Hiccup and Rapunzel were on the second floor surrounded by books. It was a little after two when Rapunzel left; her Mother apparently needed her at home.

>Hiccup spent another half hour practicing his craft. He left the library with a stack of books and a bag of supplies. Remembering the souvenirs, he headed back home to retrieve the suit he 'borrowed' and went to North's. The store was just as busy as ever, with tourists and shoppers walking around on each floor. Hiccup headed straight up to the men's department first to ditch the suit. He figured if anything he could get store credit and use it towards the gifts for his relatives.
He found Lumiere fixing a display in the sportswear section.

>"Hey, Lumiere."
"Ah monsieur Hiccup! Welcome back to North's."

>"I came to return the suit and I kinda need advice on Christmas presents."
"You came to the right place. St. North's has something for everyone. First, let us return your clothes."

>After a remarkably short return process, Lumiere sent Hiccup up to the third floor's clearance section. Lumiere had been right. There was a little something for everything up there; from discounted golf clubs to tool sets. It seemed to have everything he was looking for, even Jack.
'Jack?!'

>Jack was crouched next to a clothing rack. He seemed to be watching someone or something. Hiccup took a deep breath, added this sighting to the list of Jack's odd behavior in his brain, and crouched down behind him. He tapped Jack on the shoulder.
Jack jumped. "Ah! What the--"

>"What are you doing here?"
"Shh!" Jack raised a finger to his lips. He turned back around. Whoever he had been watching had moved, he stood, ran, and quickly ducked behind a shopping cart. Hiccup sat next to the clothing rack. 'I don't even know how to describe this. Does he do this all the time?'

>He followed Jack's line of eyesight. There was a group of girls, somewhere between ten or twelve years old, standing in a cluster. They were admiring a set of glass figurines. Among them was a girl with choppy brown hair, her bangs hiding one eye. She reminded Hiccup of his first crush, Astrid. Her bangs had always been a little off, ever since the time she had cut them herself in the second grade.
The girl moved away from the group and headed towards the escalator. Jack shifted his focus then, just to her. He waited until she got on the escalator, stood, and followed her down. Hiccup stood up then and watched the escalator. There were three people between Jack and the girl. He got on behind an elderly couple and followed Jack.

>The girl got off on the next landing. She looked slightly nervous, and glanced behind herself twice. Of course, every time she looked around Jack would duck behind something else. Eventually she made her way
to the bathroom. At that point Jack let her be, and wandered off into the juvenile section. Hiccup caught up with him then.

>"Jack!"
Jack flinched. "What are you? Some kind of ninja?"

>"What are you even?" Hiccup crossed his arms. "Forget it." I probably shouldn't even bother" Jack said, eye narrowing.

>"Nothing. It's none of my business what's going here anyway."
"Really?" Jack asked.

>"Yeah." Hiccup dropped his arms to his sides.
"So you're going away for winter vacation?"

>"Yeah. Back to Berk for Snoggletog. It's our hometown."
"But I thought you came from here."

>"Nope. I moved here from Berk when I was nine. We go back every now and then. I really don't understand why we moved in the first place

since Dad loves it so much."
Jack looked at the doorway leading to the woman's bathroom, then back at Hiccup. "What kind of place is Berk?"

>"Ehâ€|Hiccup rubbed his arm. "It's a cold, suburban town full of Scandinavian people who think they're Vikings. Everyone is just a little bit obnoxious, and we all have weird names to ward off bad spirits."
"Is that why they named you Hiccup?"

>"Wellâ€|Hiccup is a family nameâ€|but its given to the runt of the litter. As far as I know, I'm the latest Hiccup to come out that place. My grandfather was also named Hiccup Horrendous Haddock. I'm the third."
"That's gotta be one of the coolest names I've ever heard."

>Hiccup blushed, looked at the ground, and scratched his head.
"Noâ€|It's nothing special." He checked his phone. "Anyway, I only came here to get gifts for my family. I'm going back up to clearance."

>"Ohâ€|" Jack looked back at the bathroom, then at Hiccup. "Okay, but-"
"But what?"

>"How come you never ask?" Jack's attention was completely directed at Hiccup.
"Askâ€|what exactly?"

>"What's wrong with me?" Jack had a serious expression on his face, mixed with a bit of concern.
"Oh." Hiccup looked away for a moment. "Well, I just figured you would tell me if you wanted me to know."

>"I see." Jack crossed his arms.
The girl emerged from the bathroom. Jack ducked behind a mannequin.

"But you're not..." Hiccup searched for the right words as he looked between the girl and Jack. "No, No way!" Jack said. "It's not like that! This isn't Dateline!" Hiccup laughed. "I didn't think so. Just checking."

>"Well, happy buying. Make sure you take advantage of our gift wrapping services!"
Hiccup rolled his eyes. "Sure. I guess I'll see you in a week."

>"Yeah, I'd see you off, but I've got practice for the next few daysâ€|" His voice was barely above a whisper.
"I understand. See you." Hiccup headed back up to clearance, leaving Jack to spy on the girl. Hiccup deemed the situation odd, but there was something about the way he was spying her.

>"I'll check on them on my way out."
He spent the next hour digging in bargain bins and shifting through racks until he found gifts for his family. Once he was satisfied, he headed home. His knitting still needed a little work, and he was eager to get back to his needlework. He took an hour to practice before working on his goal: Jack's scarf.

>Stoick came out of his training room to make himself a snack. Usually, if Hiccup was home, he would make his father a sandwich and leave it in the fridge. He hadn't heard Hiccup come back in, so he was surprised when he saw him in the living room. What surprised him the most was what his son was doing.
"Sonâ€|Are you _knitting_?"

>Hiccup looked up from the pattern. "Uhâ€|yeah. Hey, Dad."
Stoick furrowed his brow for a moment. He had always been worried about his son. Hiccup never brought friends over. When he was younger, he tried a few sports, but nothing really stuck, and after a while Stoick stopped pushing him. Hiccup had only concerned himself with two things: his tinkering and his cat.

>It was nice to see Hiccup pick up a new hobby, but then, for Stoick the hobby was not new to the Haddock household. Val had knitted and sewn things for him. Things she made were scattered around the house,

including the scarf Hiccup wore frequently.
With Val absent from the house, Hiccup had picked up all the chores. Val had shown him a few things during his childhood, so cooking wasn't that foreign to Hiccup. Cleaning had always been a habit of his. As a child, Hiccup never had a messy room. The only 'mess' would be his collection of dragon drawings.

>So, Stoick was happy to see Hiccup outside his room, but also cautious about the change in attitude. He looked in the fridge. However there was no sandwich waiting for him this time. Stoick stroked his beard. 'Hmâ€|..'
Stoick made his own meal and retired to his room.

>Hiccup resumed his work on the scarf. 'If I just cut this outâ€|'
At midnight , Stoick came down again for a light dinner. He and Hiccup had dinner several hours ago. Hiccup had still been working on the scarf when he called his father down for dinner. Hiccup was still huddled on the couch, adding more details to the scarf. Toothless was swatting a ball of yarn around at Hiccup's feet.

>"Son." Stoick began, crossing his arms.
Hiccup looked up from the scarf. "Uhâ€|Hi."

>"I've decided son, to move up our trip."
"Hiccup put down the needles. "Sure, what time do you want to leave?"

>"Tomorrow afternoon."
"Ohâ€|" Hiccup looked down at the scarf. 'I was going to drop this by Jack's before we left. That doesn't give me much time.'

>"Uh, sure. I'm almost done packing anyway."
"I'm almost done. I'll just add details in the morning." He yawned and closed his eyes. "Just a little napâ€|"

The next thing Hiccup knew, he was waking up again. Toothless was kneading his sweater, trying to settle down on Hiccup's stomach. "Oh hey, bud. Morning."

>Hiccup glanced at the table. Jack's scarf was folded and nearly complete; he wanted to add a few more snowflakes. The television was still on. The news repeat was playing, with the words 'previously recorded' stamped in the top left corner of the screen.
'The repeat show? That meansâ€|'

>It was eleven thirty. Nearly noon.
"Hel's skirts!"

>Hiccup jumped up and ran upstairs, he pulled off his clothes and changed into a hoodie and a pair of jeans. "Toothless! Let's go for a walk buddy!"
He ran back downstairs and picked up the scarf.

>'It came out good, all things considered.'
He took a bag from the kitchen drawer and some left over tissue paper from his family's gifts. "And now its presentable."

>When he got to the front door, Toothless was waiting with his leash in his mouth. "Good boy."
He opened the front door. And stepped outside. His father was backing out of the driveway. "Ah, yer awake, I was just about to wake you and Toothless. Everything's ready, all the luggage is in the car. Let's get a move on."

>"That's cool Dad. But how about we make a little pit stop?"<p>

The shouts of Burgess high school's lacrosse coach echoed across the field. Jack was sprawled out in the grass, his trusty lacrosse stick next to him. In his opinion, it was way to early for drills. At the same time, he understood the urgency. 'Coach Shang doesn't have much time left at Burgess. He wants to get us a trophy before the next evaluation.'

>He rolled over. The coach, a tall , tan man of Asian descent, was barking at his teammates. Jack decided it would be best to get up on

his own before Shang gave him a piece of his mind. 'That guy needs to find a girlfriend.'
<p>

Hiccup hopped out of the car and headed for Burgess field. He breath came out in little white puffs as he hurried over. The gate was open. He spotted Jack sitting in the stands, sipping something out of a Styrofoam cup. The other team members were in the stands or running laps around the track at the other end of the field. "Jack!"

>Hiccup went up the walkway that lead away form the field and into the stands.
"Hey Hic!" Jack grinned. "Where's the fire?"

>"Dadâ€¦ moved up our departure." He handed Jack the bag. "I wanted to give you...your giftâ€¦"
"My giftâ€¦" Jack looked at the bag. "But I didn't even get you anything yet."

>"It's no big deal." Hiccup said, stuffing his hands into his pockets.
Jack pulled the scarf out of the bag. It was soft and blue, almost matching his eyes. Little snowflakes had been stitched in, in shades of blue and white.

>"Wow.."
"It's a little rough around the edges. I mean, I made it and-"

>Hiccup was cut off by a sudden hug. He found his face buried in Jack's tracksuit. He took a deep breath then, inhaling something akin to mint and pine. 'He kinda smells like Christmas.'
>Hiccup was still dazed when Jack released him. Jack put the scarf on, wrapping it around his neck. "It's so warmâ€¦it's perfect." He smiled.

>Hiccup felt his heart pounding. 'He should warn someone before he smiles like that.' He swallowed hard. "Well, I'm glad you like it."
A car horn blared in the distance. Stoick was getting impatient.

>"Ahâ€¦" Hiccup looked in the direction of the parking lot. "Sounds like it's time for me to go. See you in a few days."
"Alright."

>"OVERLAND!"
Shang's voice echoed across the field.

>Jack glanced at his coach. "See ya."<p>

I apologize for the long wait. But look how long these chapters are

****Coach Shang is Captain Shang from Mulan.****

>Hel is Loki's daughter. Since Stoick and co. always make reference to Thor, I figured Hiccup could mention some other figures form norse mythology

7. Chapter 7

A thousand pardons.

Jack is beginning to look like a type A nutcase. Sitting in the snow, refusing to go home, drinking alone at his own party, stalking little girlsâ€¦All-or most, will be explained in due time.

****Texting with Jack****

Hiccup returned to the car with a flushed face and a pounding heart. Jack's hug had come as a surprise. There was something about the way Jack had suddenly grabbed himâ€¦Hiccup couldn't quite put his finger on it. Toothless squirmed around in his carrier next to him. Hiccup

took a peek inside. "Don't worry buddy, I'll let you out at every rest stop."

Berk was a town with its own island, one of a few on the Alaskan peninsula. On average it was freezing. On a good day it was blistering.

The drive was long, considering Burgess was on the other side of the country. They made several stops across the states. Hiccup's mind wandered between his stay in Berk, and his life in Burgess. In Berk he had acquaintances. He chatted several of his childhood friends online and made the effort to see them anytime he was in Berk. In Burgess his 'friendships' were almost non-existent before Jack. He joined Ms. Ana's art club out of pity, and spoke with it's other members now and then, but there was nothing significant there. It wasn't until that cold night he found Jack in snow that he started having a real relationship with another person.

Thinking about Jack made his heart start pounding again. His head felt fuzzy, and his stomach seemed to be doing flips. Hiccup thought it was heartburn, considering the weird things they ate on their way to Berk. After all, it couldn't be Jack that was making him feel this way. Jack, with his smile, and his laugh, and his eyes like a bright blue skyâ€|

Hiccup curled up in the backseat and tried not to think about anything for the remainder of the ride. Finally they left there car on the mainland and hauled their luggage on to the boat to Berk.

Hiccup took his mother's scarf out of a duffel bag and wrapped it around his neck. He held Toothless' carrier. "Look, bud! We're almost home!"

Stoick glanced at his son. Hopefully Hiccup would be bringing someone else to this island one day.

When the boat docked, Stoick and Hiccup found themselves swarmed with happy relatives and friends. Uncle Spitelout welcomed Stoick with a hearty handshake and Hiccup with a bone crushing hug. His wife, Freda, did what she was known for, and fainted on the spot.

Snotlout shook his head and tried to prop his mother up. 'Fainting' Freda's head rolled.

"Oh come on, Mom." Snotlout rolled his eyes. "You do this every time!"

Among the welcoming party were Astrid, Fishlegs, Ruffnut, and Tuffnut- Hiccup's chatroom buddies. After Spitelout set him down, they greeted him.

"Hey Hiccup!" Fishlegs bore a small wrapped package. "Welcome back!"

>"The hairy hooligan returns!" Ruffnut said.<p>

"And the hairless runt." Tuffnut murmured.

Astrid nudged Tuffnut hard in the ribs and smiled. "Happy Snoggletog."

Hiccup felt a little warmer on the inside. Or, as warm as one could feel on the chilly isle that was Berk. "Thanks." He smiled.

"Brother." Spitelout said, "Welcome back to Berk. Now, we will have a feast in honor of your return."

There was a round of shouts that sounded less like cheering and more like battlecries. Hiccup shook his head. Once again he had been thrown into the time and ice frozen village of vikings.

Almost every person in town showed up at the Haddock's ancestral home. Fishlegs peppered Hiccup with questions about 'the big city' while everyone gorged themselves with food. Fish, pigs, and sheep were the main sources of nutrient in Berk, served with any small vegetables that survived in the nearly barren soil.

"So, cousin." Snotlout began, cutting into the conversation. "Got yourself a girlfriend in the city?"

Hiccup nearly choked on his soup. "Nope, not at the moment Snotlout. I've been kinda preoccupied...with...other things."

"Like that mural you told me about."

"Yup." Hiccup nodded. "Important stuff there. No time for anything else."

"Sounds..."Tuffnut began.

"Boring..."Ruffnut finished.

Hiccup rubbed his arm. "...So, how are you guys?"

"Pretty good." Fishlegs replied. "My LARP guild is really taking off."

Astrid nodded. "Alright. I taught stormfly this new trick..."

"I'm totally bench pressing like, 280 now." Snotlout announced.

Ruffnut laughed. "He wishes. I got this new tattoo..."

Tuffnut observed the mark. "Isn't that a bruise from last week?"

"I'm gonna go take some food up to toothless." Hiccup said, standing. "Be right back."

Toothless was pacing around the guest room. Hiccup gave him a scratch behind the ears and a plate of scraps.

"I'll be back soon buddy." He returned to the dining room.

Snotlout was balancing a plate of food on his finger. Astrid was rolling her eyes.

"So I'm sue you'll all be happy to hear that I'm training to join the

Wrestling federation." He set the plate down. "Yep. Someone's gotta uphold the Hairy Hooligan legacy."

Spitelout grinned. "He's a chip off the old block."

Hiccup took his seat and tried not to make eye contact with anyone. 'Yeah...Unlike me.'

Hiccup felt his heart sink a little. Every time he was in Berk, he had to be reminded of his place in the great circle of vikings. His family had served as villages leaders and eventually majors for years. While Spitelout had control of the community, he was pretty sure his father would eventually return and take his place as Mayor of Berk. As much as Hiccup liked Berk, returning to it gave him a sense of dread. His father had already announced his retirement from Wrestling. It was only a matter of time before Hiccup would be back for good, back to being the biggest disappointment in Haddock history.

He spent the rest of the day indoors, only coming out for the occasional walk with T

Toothless.

It was during one of these walks when his cellphone rang.

"Hello?"

"Merry Christmas Hic!"

>It was Jack. A small smile formed on Hiccup's face. "Merry Christmas Jack." He stopped walking. Toothless looked up at him. "I almost forgot it was Christmas."<p>

"What!? How can you forget Christmas?"

"Christmas is often overshadowed by Snoggletog here. The only reminder is the pine tree in the square. And even then, it's decorated with fake weapons."

"I guess that makes sense. Wait, did you say weapons?"

"Uh huh. They're tributes to the Gods, so they'll watch over us in battle. Not that Berk has gone to battle' in like, a hundred years."

"Wow. Your hometown sounds hardcore."

Hiccup shook his head, even though Jack couldn't see him. "It's like a time warp, Jack. If it weren't for the ferry boat or the occasional truck, I'd swear I was in the middle ages."

"...So I'm guessing you didn't get anything for Christmas then?"

"I don't know yet." Hiccup began to walk again. "We give gifts at night. When do you get yours?"

"North is into the Christmas morning thing. Big breakfast, then we open presents. It's his favorite holiday-I pretty sure 'cause it gives him a legitimate reason to dress up like Santa Claus."

"I think every kid who's ever visited 's thinks your Dad is Santa." Hiccup laughed. "He has that Miracle on 34th street thing going on."

Jack chuckled. "Yeah, I thought he was Santa too. When I first met him, it was right before Christmas. He wanted to adopt me." Jack's voice was softer then. "I wasn't to thrilled about the idea at first, but he really tried to be a good guardian for me. Plus, his house was full of toys. I definitely thought he was Santa for like, a year."

"Well, the 'Naughty/Nice' tattoos certainly add to the image." Hiccup could hear noise in the background.

"Ah, it's time for dinner. I'll talk to you later." Jack sounded a little reluctant to hang up.

"I forgot it was later back home. Good night Jack."

"G'night Hic."

Hiccup slipped his phone back into his pocket.

Hic. There was that nickname again. All it took was for Jack to remove a syllable and his name sounded completely different.

Someone nudged Hiccup's shoulder.

"Ah! Oh, Hi Fishlegs."

Fishlegs had a mischievous smile on his face. "Sooo, who were _you_ talking to just now?"

>"Huh? Just a friend from back home. Why?" Hiccup blinked in confusion.<p>

"Just a friend huh? That big smile on your face says differently."

Hiccup frowned. "What?"

"I haven't seen you that happy since you got here. Snotlout was right! You do have someone back in the city!"

Hiccup crossed his arms. "I do not!"

"Riiight." Fishlegs shook his head. "So, are they into dragons like you, or art or something?"

"O doubt that my ****friend**** likes dragons as much as I do. And my ****friend**** is more of the athletic type."

"So, you found another Astrid then?"

Toothless began to tug on his leash. Hiccup scooped him up.

"Ah...Getting cold bud?"

"I was suprised when you gave up on Astrid so easily. But, since you found someone new-"

'Look. Number one: It was never gonna work with Astrid. Two: It's definitely nott gonna work with Jack, on account that I don't like him that way. Three: I need to get my cat inside."

"You wanna grab a mug at Gobber's?"

"Okay."

Hiccup and Fishlegs ducked into Gobber's MEAT and TEETH, the part-dentistry clinic part restaurant the Gobber ran out of his home. It was the closest thing Berk had to offer to a real hangout spot, and peopel of all ages were packed into its little booths.

"So what's Jack like?"

"He's...nice."

"Does he LARP?"

Hiccup laughed nervously. "Nope. I don't think so. Not the type."

>"Oh. Well you said he's athletic right? How?"
"Jack plays on the school's lacrosse team." "Cool. So, you've seen him play?"
>"Once." Hiccup rubbed his arm. Talking about Jack made him feel slightly uncomfortable. But why? It wasn't like he was saying anything bad. Would he feel this way if Jack asked him about Fishlegs? No.<p>

Hiccup was certain of that. If Jack asked about Fishlegs, he would have probably old him anything.

"I saw him play once after school started."

Ms. Ana had suggested that they attend the game to get organic poses for their art homework. Hiccup had watched Jack race across the filed, scoring, watching, calculating. He was different than the Jack he knew from class. A little more serious.

"He was pretty good." He sipped his cider. That thudding in his chest was back.

Hiccup stared at his mug. Fishlegs went in to a monologue about his precious dog. Toothless began to knead into Hiccup's leg. Hiccup let his friend continue for another twenty minutes before excusing himself and heading home. He exchanged greetings with his father before returning to his room. Before he could get comfortable, his phone rang. It was a text message from Jack.

JUST GOT A NEW SOUND SYSTEM. CANT WAIT TO BE OBNOXIOUS. :)
-Jack

Hiccup smiled at that.

Congrats. But don't expect me to ride in there.-Hiccup

Hiccup was about to turn his phone off when Jack responded with:

But ur supposed to be my wingman. It's no fun alone. :(-Jack

Hiccup sighed and replied:

Fine. But only if you play daft punk. Hiccup thought it would end there but then Jack answered:

Damn Straight we're playing Daft Punk. The entire soundtrack of interstellar 5555. -Jack

Hiccup was suprised.

Wow. Most people don't even know about that movie -Hiccup

I'm not most people.-Jack.

Their exchange continued for another hour before Hiccup fell asleep. Jack proceeded to text Hiccup everynight until he left Burgess. Hiccup had learned a lot about Jack then. He liked house music. He hated disney sitcoms.. He was a former World of Warcraft addict. He used tumblr. The more Jack revealed, the more Hiccup realised they had in common. It wasn't long before Hiccup was in the backseat of his Father's car headed home. He wondered what he would discover about Jack next.

8. Chapter 8

I have a feeling this chapter should be called 'Meet me at the party, stuff is going down' but let's stick with the current format, shall we?

Chapter: New Years with Jack

Hiccup awoke from his two-state nap to find they had finally arrived in Burgess. The Christmas mood was still in effect. Every tree was covered in dazzling lights. Music was pouring from tin speakers tied to street posts. The windows of North's department store featured mannequin's giving presents in one panel and partying in another. North's end of year celebration was tomorrow. Stoick drove them home.

After they arrived, Hiccup spent half hour going through mail and checking the house. Everything was just as they had left it. He took a hour long nap before wakibg up to prepare dinner. Tired of the delicacies of Berk, Hiccup settled on making meatloaf and mashed potatoes.

Sometime after dinner Hiccup awoke on the couch to the sensation of Toothless kneading into his sweater.

He sat up slowly, yawning. It was a little past eleven. The house was warm, a change from the drafty room he occupied in Berk. Part of him missed the chill, but he would be back to normal soon. He channel surfed for a little while until his phone rang.

"Psst. Hey."

"Jack?"

"Do androids dream of electric sheep?"

"Huh?"

"They probably do..."

"Are you on tumblr?"

"Maaaaybe. Are you back in Forks?"

"If by Forks you mean Burgess, then yes Jack, I am. We got back a few hours ago."

"Why didn't you call me? We would've had dinner at Tiana's place."

"They opened a Tiana's place?"

"Yes...and no. Tiana's place is doing the catering for the party, so there's a pop up restaurant on the sixth floor of St. North's. The actual restaurant will open in a month. Tiana herself will be there."

"Sounds like your doing PR for her or something."

"What's wrong with a little advertising?"

"Oh nothing."

Jack was quiet for a moment. "...I never thought of that."

"What?"

"What if babies stay still under mobiles because they look like hawks flying overhead. That would mean babies are just playing dead..."

"Get off Tumblr. Now."

"Oh you're no fun."

Their exchange went on a little longer before Hiccup fell asleep.

He woke up again around noon. Stoick had left a note stating he was out training. The big house seemed even bigger without his father around, so Hiccup abandoned the real world and decided to work on his tiny village. Being in Berk had inspired him. He sketched new ideas and worked with wooden bits until loud music interrupted his thoughts. Someone was blasting Daft Punk, and Hiccup was pretty sure he knew who it was. The bell rang. Looking at the clock, Hiccup saw that it was almost five. He headed downstairs. Toothless was standing at the door, which meant the visitor was not a stranger.

He opened the door to see Jack standing there in a half zipped parka. The scarf Hiccup had made him was wrapped snugly around his neck, obscuring the bottom half of his face. Jack was holding a rather large box, wrapped with bright wrapping paper. He moved forward and Hiccup moved aside, letting him in.

Jack pulled on the scarf, revealing his mouth. "Hey Hic. Welcome back!" There was that dazzling smile that Hiccup had yet to get used to. He presented Hiccup with the box. "Happy

Christmahannakwanzikah!"

Hiccup laughed and took the box from him. "Thanks." He examined the box. "What is it?"

Jack laughed. "You see sport, that's the thing about wrapped gifts. Ya gotta open them." Jack took off his parka and his boots. He followed Hiccup and Toothless to the living room. Hiccup sat down on the sofa and began to unwrap his present. Christmas was not a big thing in the Haddock household. As a child he received the occasional toy. Now, he got gift cards. Which was why he was extra appreciative when he saw what Jack had bought for him.

"Jack..." Hiccup was shocked.

Jack frowned. "What? Don't tell me you don't like it. Goldie said you kept staring at it when you were in the hobby shop.

"No...I love it...I've wanted this art set since I first moved here. It's just...so expensive..."

Jack shrugged. "North says that money isn't an issue when it comes to happiness."

Hiccup glanced down at the set. It was a 80 piece collection featuring almost every medium from craypas to gouache. Inspiration almost overtook him then. What would he try out first? A sketch and ink with the pencils and pens? A painting on the included pad? Maybe he would shape a dragon out of the clay?

"Thanks, Jack. This means a lot to me."

Jack grinned. "Now that's what I want to hear."

Hiccup put the set down. "Would you like something to drink?"

Jack plopped down on the sofa. "I'll have bourbon sport, on the rocks. But make it quick, I've gotta be back in a half-hour."

Hiccup nodded. "Sure thing, Gatsby. If by bourbon, you mean hot chocolate. And by rocks, you mean jumbo marshmallows."

Jack laughed. "Of course sport! Of course!"

In minutes Jack and Hiccup were sitting in front of the tv with hot chocolate in hand.

"Glad to be back in Burgess?"

Hiccup nodded. "Yeah. Well, not to say I won't miss Berk. I just like hot showers more."

Jack seemed shocked. "They don't have hot showers?"

"Well they do. It's just that they don't last very long. Heating is a serious issue. If you're lucky, you live in one of the newer houses. My family's house is like, a hundred years old. The furnace is a mess, but the fireplace keeps the den nice and toasty."

Jack raised his mug. "Here's to indoor heating."

Hiccup smiled and raised his mug. "Hear,hear."

A Honeymooner's marathon was playing on the television. The neighborhood was quiet and the sun had already set. Jack was just getting comfortable when his cellphone rang. Jack glanced at it and sighed. "I have to get back."

He glanced at the clock. The party didn't start or another hour and a half. Did he really have to go?

Hiccup stood up. "Okay. I guess I'll see you later then."

"Yeah." Jack pulled himself out the couch and headed for the door. "Oh, Goldie said that the mural painting is going to start on the second at 2, not noon."

He walked towards the hall. Hiccup walked behind him. "Who's Goldie?"

Jack glanced back at Hiccup. "Rapunzel. You know, the girl with the really long blond hair. _Goldilocks_."

"Do you give everyone you know a nickname?"

Jack slipped on his boots, and put his parka back on.

"Nah..." Jack opened the door. "Only the people that matter."

Hiccup froze then. "Oh."

Jack smiled. "See you later."

Hiccup nodded. "Yeah...Bye."

Jack left then.

"Only the people that matter."

Hiccup got that weird feeling in his stomach again. He took two anti-acids, washed up and got ready for the party.

Hiccup and his father arrived about a half-hour late. The Tartakovsky hotel was a buzz with excitement, with guests and extras pouring in to the building. The ballroom was decorated in gold and silver. A live band played music in the corner. North and Jack stood in the middle of the room, talking with what Hiccup could only describe as a scottish version of his father.

The man was tall and large like North and Stoick, but sporting a wooden leg and a head of vibrant red hair. The man was accompanied by a wife and four children. His wife, woman of middle age with graying hair, was whispering something to her oldest child. Her eldest was a girl with a head of hair more red and unruly than her father's. The girl was dressed in a emerald satin party dress, looking slightly irritated about whatever her mother was saying. There were three small boys running around them, stuffing their faces with food.

Jack made eye contact with Hiccup and waved him over. North introduced them immediately. "Ah! This is Stoick Haddock and Hiccup

Haddock. Stoick is starting gym line in my store."

Hiccup raised an eyebrow and looked at his father. "You are?"

"Stoick, this is Fergus DunBroch, a business partner of mine. He and his family have moved here from Scotland."

Fergus's wife extended her hand to Stoick. "Elinor DunBroch, pleased to meet you." She looked down at her children. "Boys!" The triplets stopped moving and stood still in front of her. "These are my sons: Harris, Hubert, and Hamish. And this," She placed her hand on her daughter's shoulder. "Is my daughter, Merida."

Merida smiled then. Her mother nudged her, and she rolled her eyes before curtsying. "Pleasure to meet you."
>Hiccup gave half a bow. "Welcome to Burgess."<p>

Stoick patted his son on the back, almost causing him to fall over. "My son and I moved here a few years ago from Berk."

Harris tugged Stoick's pant leg. "Excuse me sir, but are you the Hairy Hooligan?"

Stoick laughed heartily. "Of course!"

"Ah knew it!" Merida said, smiling. "My brothers watched all you matches."

The boys all began to tug on Stoick.

"When are you going to fight again?" "Are you going to come back?" "You're not realllly retired right?"

Elinor swatted at them. "Boys, please. Calm down." She looked at Hiccup. "Hiccup, I suppose you are Merida's age. You attend the local high school?"

Hiccup nodded. "Ah, yeah. I'm a junior at Burgess High."
>"Oh wonderful!" Elinor clasped her hands together. "Merida was in her third year back home. Ah trust you and Jack can help her adjust to your school."<p>

"Sure." Hiccup said. "Right, Jack? Jack?"
>Jack's interested had moved on to another sight. His focus was on Mavis.<p>

Mavis was dressed in a black cocktail dress with silver trim, and lace gloves. She was chatting animatedly with a young man who had to be around twenty. From the look on Jack's face, he obviously didn't like what he saw. He looked back at Hiccup. "Huh? Oh yeah, I'll...help..."

"Hiccup?"

Hiccup turned to see a slightly frazzled looking Rapunzel.

Rapunzel pushed a strand of hair out of her face. Her long tendrils had been pulled into a braid. She was dressed in a violet dress with a lavender bodice and pink trim that stretched down to the floor.

"Hi."

"There you are Goldie." Jack smiled. "Glad you could make it!"

"Merida, this is our friend Rapunzel." Hiccup gestured to her.
"Rapunzel, this is Merida DunBroch."

Merida curtsied again under her mother's watch. "Ah'll be coming to yer school soon. Pleased to meet you."

Rapunzel returned the gesture. "Rapunzel Gothel. Nice to meet you."

She took Merida's hand and shook it. "I love your hair."

"Oh...Thank you." Merida's face reddened a bit then. She was more used to staring than compliments. "Yers is nice too."

"I don't know about you guys, but I'm getting kinda hungry." He looked at North, Stoick, and Fergus. "Do you guys mind if we get a table?"

Jack, Merida, Rapunzel, and Hiccup sat at a round table in the dining room.

"So, Merida," Rapunzel began. "how do you like Burgess so far."

>"It's nice." Merida replied. "Well, Ah do miss Angus though."
"Angus?" Hiccup repeated.

"Mah horse." Merida said, stabbing her steak. "He's back home with some relatives. I wish I couda brought 'im."

"A horse huh. Your family has land back in Ireland?" Jack asked.

>"Scotland." Merida corrected. "And yes. We lived in a restored castle. Father had a village build around it. It's a tourist attraction."

"Sounds nice." Hiccup said. "I've always wanted to go there. The ruins seem interesting."

>"Yeah." Merida sighed. "There chock full of history. A history me mum loves to drum into my 'ead."<p>

"What did you do for fun there?" Jack asked.

"Ah rode Angus. Did Archery, football. Well, _soccer_ I mean."

"We have a couple of teams at school." Jack said.

"And clubs." Hiccup interjected.

"I'm sure you'll find something you like." Rapunzel said, beaming.

As their conversation continued, Jack's attention swayed to Mavis. Every now and then he caught a glimpse of her a that mysterious older man. Eventually he excused himself from the table. After awhile he didn't come back. The night wore on and soon Rapunzel had to go home.

Elinor shooed her children off to bed, and requested Merida and Hiccup's help in getting them up to their rooms. The DunBroch's were staying at the hotel while their house was completed. Fergus had decided to move a little earlier than scheduled.

Merida had enough of the party for the time being, and decided to retire until midnight, leaving Hiccup alone. Just as Hiccup was considering leaving early, North approached him.

"Have you seen Jack?"

"No sir."

North stroked his beard. "It is almost midnight. I would hate to do the countdown without him."

"I understand sir, I'll try to find him."

"Thank you Hiccup."

>With that, Hiccup began his search. He first asked Mavis who was once again with the mysterious older man. She didn't know where Jack was, but she did have an idea.<p>

"Jack likes to go to the surveillance room sometimes to chat up the guards. Either that, or try a hall closet. He takes naps in those."

So Hiccup took her advice and looked in the surveillance room. Lo and behold, there he found Jack, alone sitting in the corner with half a bottle of champagne. Hiccup sighed and closed the door behind himself. "What is this?"

Jack looked up at him. "Oh hey Hic. It's me, Jack."

"Sadly, I know." Hiccup looked at the monitors. "I don't get you Jack. Why do you do this? Why do you act one way in public, and the doâ€|this I figured you had some reason, but I don't' get it. You-"

"I have a sister."

"What?"

"I have. A sister." Jack said, raking a hand through his hair.

"Sorry." Hiccup said. "But weren't you...adopted?"

"Yep." Jack sat up. "Have a seat Hic." Jack patted the floor. " It's story time."

Hiccup reluctantly sat down next to him.

"So once upon a time, an eight year old boy and his four year old sister ran away from their abusive parents. They lived in an orphanage for years." Jack spoke in a sing song voice before sighing heavily. "It was horrible. I mean, the people that worked there were nice, and the beds were warm butâ€|" Jack stared at the floor. "It was horrible. The younger kids got adopted left and right. Everyday I had to sit and watch and hope no one would take my sister away from

me. I purposely hid her a few times because I was afraid that we would get separated. And then, we didâ€¦"

Hiccup's eyes widened. "That girl in the department storeâ€¦"

"Yeah. That's my sister. Sophie Overland. Well, she's Sophie Bennett now."

>"How come you were hiding from her the other day?"<p>

"Sheâ€¦doesn't know me." Jack said. "She doesn't remember me at all." He rubbed his neck. "I was a little hellraiser at the orphanage. I thought no one would adopt us or separate us if I acted that way. But they took her anyway."

"I'm sorry Jack."

"Ha." Jack laughed, and that sad little smirk Hiccup had seen before was back. "I'm the sorry one. Maybe if I hadn't been such a little bastard..."His voice was cracking. "Maybe the Bennetts would have adopted me too."

"Jack..." Hiccup put a hand on Jack's shoulder. "You were just a kid. I'm sure they'd understand now if you wanted to just talk to her."

"You'd think that. They made it clear that they want me to have nothing to do with her."

"But why?"

"They don't want Sophie to know that she's adopted." Jack pulled his knees to his chest. "So naturally, I'm not allowed to talk to her."

Hiccup looked away. "Ohâ€¦."

"Well, it's not just that." Jack said, resting his chin on his knees. "Do you ever get tired?"

"Of?"

>"Everything. It's like the world is moving around you, and you just don't care." Jack was gazing off somewhere distant. "So every now and then, you remove yourself from the equation."<p>

Hiccup looked at Jack. "So, this is how you remove yourself?"

"Sometimes." Jack said, sighing again. "I know it sounds selfish. But I just don't think it's fair. Do I have to be Jack all the time? Do I have to meet everyone's expectations?"

"No." Hiccup replied. "But this isn't the answer."

"Then what is?"

Hiccup shrugged. "Talking to someone?"

Jack stared at him for a moment.

"Sorry. I'm probably not the best person for this talk." Hiccup rubbed his arm. "I mean, I don't get nearly as much attention as you do."

Jack glanced back at the screen. "Be thankful for that."

The New Year 's Eve celebration was being shown on the top monitor. As the audience cheered, the show's host began the countdown.

"Ten! Nine! Eight! Seven!"

Jack frowned. "Shoot. Whereâ€| " He looked at Hiccup.

"Six! Five! Four!"

"I need my New Year's kissâ€| "

Before Hiccup realized it, Jack was straddling him. " Jack!? What the- "

"Three! Two! One!"

Jack kissed him on the mouth, ignoring his protest.

"HAPPY NEW YEAR!"

9. Chapter 9

I want to thank everyone who is out there reading this. So there, Thank you. Also don't worry about this chapter's format. It will go back to normal after this.

Chapter: Denial with Hiccup

It was approximately thirty seconds after Jack kissed me that he fell asleep in my lap. It was twenty minutes after that I went back to the party, told Mister North where to find his , five hours later after said kiss...

Okay. I can't call it that. I'll call it the accident. I mean, there is no way that happened on purpose. Nope. Jack was drunk. And if there's one thing I know about drunk people, it's that they make mistakes.

A mistake. Something about calling it that...

No. No. No. No.

I'm not even going to finish that thought. There is no way that what happened means that. There's is nothing to suggest that he, that I...

No. I'm not even going to think about us that way. There is no Us, actually.

There's just me. And then there's Jack.

Jack. Jackson Overland.

I mean, sure he's nice to look at. Most people would agree with me on that right?

With his smile and his face, and that ridiculously spiky hair...

That hair that looks like its been frosted over by ice that will never melt.

And those eyes, those annoyingly blue eyes. A deeper blue than the ones you see on movie stars, or dolls, or anything artificial. Where does he get off having eyes like that? With small flecks of gray in them that look like silver whenever he smiles. Its criminal. I've caught myself staring at them more than once.

The look in those eyes when he kissed me. I couldn't tell what he was thinking. It was if he was off somewhere else, completely lost in thought. Or, drunk and not thinking at all.

I would rather that it was the first option.

Hel's skirts.

This can't be happening.

It's just one kiss. One. And he was drunk. And it tasted like champagne.

Odin's beard.

It didn't count Hiccup. You are not going to make something out of nothing. Jack has probably kissed tons of people. You are one on the list.

'Only the ones that matter.'

Don't dwell on that. He gave Rapunzel a nickname too. He would've kissed her.

Maybe, maybe not.

Don't do this. You finally have a real, practically best friend. You even convinced him to listen to Night vale.

Wait.

It isn't just the kiss though. You knit him a scarf. Who does that?

Please stop. Jack trusts you. Don't ruin this.

You didn't think it was gross though. If it had been anyone else...

He's had multiple relationships.

All ending in failure.

All girls.

Only the ones you know about.

Maybe I should just lay in this bed forever.

It could have meant something.

It could have meant nothing.

And if I stay in this bed, I don't have to find out. ...

What time is it?

Looks like noon. Hi, Toothless.

Down to the kitchen I go...

Sadly, I can't even think straight long enough to feed my cat. That's a bit negligent of me...

Okay, now that my cat has eaten, I can go back to wallowing in misery.

Admit to yourself,Hiccup. Admit it.

You like Jack now.

You're so lonely that you've latched on to the first person that kissed you. It's sad.

And, if my life were a sitcom, this is where all the stupid hijinks would begin.

I have to admit though, hijinks sound like fun.

Wow. I couldn't have a real friend for a month without having a crush on him. Well, let's not call this a crush. A slight infatuation sounds better.

In a way, its kind of like Jay and Gatsby. A sudden friendship, a odd connection. Pretty soon I'll just think of him as a friend again. I just have to learn to relax.

Phone's ringing. Crud.

"Hic?"

Aaaaand it's Jack. Permission to freak out now?

"Oh man, I can barely remember last night..."

Permission granted.

"I remember saying some stuff. But some reason I also remember a giant rabbit. I didn't freak you out, did I?"

"No, not really." I like you now, by the way.

"Oh good. I was afraid I did something weird."

Weird? You mean like kissing someone? Like kissing

me?

"..."

"Hiccup?"

Ah, right. This is a conversation. Speak, Hiccup.

"Well you told me about Sophie. "

"Oh..." Jack sounded suprised. "Wow, I've never told anyone that."

There goes that warm and fuzzy feeling.

"Well, I dunno. Maybe you just needed someone to talk to. "

"...I guess."

Please don't sound so dejected Jack. It's strangely endearing.

"Look..." Ladies and gentlemen, this is officially a afternoon special. "If you ever um, need to talk.."

"Thanks Hiccup." Odin's beard. I think I can feel him smiling through the phone. I can feel facial expressions through phones? What in the name of Hel?

"That means a lot to me."

". . . Anytime Jack."

Crap. This is not going to end well.

Thank you readers. Your fanfic will follow its regular format next week.

10. Chapter 10

Certain words keep getting removed from the fic, and it's getting on my nerves... I suppose I should fix all those typos too.

The name of the store is Saint North's.

Chapter: Painting with Rapunzel.

Hiccup's stomach was doing somersaults that morning, when Jack came to pick him up. Jack had practice, while Hiccup had to help finish the mural. Jack was talking the whole ride, pausing every now and then for Hiccup's opinion. Hiccup ofcourse, was preoccupied with sorting his feelings out.

'Is it pushy of me to sit in the passenger seat? If I sat in the back I would feel like a child...'

Jack could tell he was distracted, and decided to use this for his own amusement.

"So I hear it'll be raining gators on sunday."

Hiccup, who was staring out the window, nodded. "Mmhm..."

"Shame about that cheese flood though. "

"I gue-wait, what?!"

Jack snickered as they came to a red light. "You haven't heard a word I said, have you?"

Hiccup felt his cheeks burning. "Well no...yes...okay, half of what you said?"

Jack laughed, and Hiccup buried half of his face into his mother's scarf.

"I'm sorry." His voice was soft and muffled by the fabric. "I'm a little distracted."

Jack patted him on the head. "It's fine."

Hiccup pulled on his scarf. It was starting to get really warm in the car...

They were at Burgess high before he realized it. The lot was mostly empty. Hiccup spotted Ms. Ana's beat up car in its usual spot. Jack hopped out first and grabbed his equipment from the backseat. He slung his bag over his shoulder, and held his lacrosse stick like a walking staff.

After Hiccup got out, Jack locked the door.

"I'll see you after practice. " Jack said. "Come find me if you're done early."

"Okay." Hiccup replied. "See you later. "

Hiccup began his trek across the half-frozen parking lot. He shivered as the wind picked up. If it was strong enough, one gust could send him sliding across the lot and down into the woods below. The lack of a barrier bothered him, but he ignored it. As far as he knew, no one had ever gotten that close anyway.

He entered the school. It was quiet, except for the echo of distant chatter. He followed the sounds to gymnasium. Rapunzel, Mavis, and a few other students were there, working on the wall. The outline was already up. Hiccup took off his coat, leaving it in a pile with the others. Rapunzel greeted him first. "Hi, Hiccup!" To him she was like a burst of sunlight, sudden and blinding. Hiccup, wondering if crushing on Jack was turning him into a poet, waved at her. "Hi Rapunzel."

Mavis gave him a nod and returned to her work. Hiccup tensed up when he saw her. Jack didn't seem too happy when he saw Mavis with another guy.

A sickening feeling rose in his stomach. He shook it off and grabbed a paintbrush. 'They dated before, remember?' He began working on filling the outlined painting with color.

Unbeknownst to Hiccup, he was being watched.

Rapunzel looked away from her work every now and then to look at Hiccup. Light shone in through a window, making the highlights in his hair stand out. She knew they were natural, of course. Rapunzel had watched the sun slowly bleach them into his hair. She had known Hiccup since the eighth grade, when they first met in art class. He had shared his crayons with her. Hiccup had spent that class drawing a large dragon.

When Rapunzel had asked why he would draw something so scary, he covered it up. To this day, she still caught him drawing dragons in his notes. One day Ms. Ana had given them group work. Even though Hiccup was participating, he was still doodling dragons on the back of his sketchbook. She had caught him then. This time, not wanting to embarrass him, Rapunzel told him they were nice. He smiled then. It was a sudden, sweet smile that remained in Rapunzel's mind.

But today that smile seemed to be a distant memory. Hiccup was painting the wall with a vacant look in his eyes. His technique with color was still coming through, regardless of where his head was.

"Hiccup?"

Hiccup started painting a bush blue. Well, forget what was said about his coloring.

"Hiccup!" Rapunzel repeated, louder this time.

Startled, Hiccup dropped his brush. "Huh?"

"You seem...distracted. "

"Oh..." Hiccup rubbed his arm and looked at the wall. "Sorry...I'll fix that."

"Did something happen?" Rapunzel asked.

Hiccup searched for the right words. "Um..." 'Jack happened. I have a crush on Jack. Would you like to hear about it? My crush. I have one. IT'S JACK.' "I'm just sorting out some personal issues. I should be fine soon."

Jack ran across the field. He was warm and sweaty despite the cold. Shang was barking commands, his voice echoing across the area. Jack rolled his eyes and headed for the stands. 'It's like he thinks we're soldiers or something.' He looked around. A blotch of red stood out from the scenery. Merida was watching them practice through the gate. Her gloved fingers gripped the wire, her breath came out in short puffs. A cap of wool covered her head, but her wild hair could not be contained in it. A itchy looking scarf concealed half of her face. He locked eyes with her for a moment. It was if there was something he wanted to say, but he couldn't find the words.

"OVERLAND! BACK TO THE FIELD! "

Jack gave Shang a salute and walked away from the stands. Another two hours passed before Jack was free from practice. His legs felt like

noodles, and his bag seemed heavier than usual. 'I could use a good meal, and a nice hot shower. He spotted Merida walking away from the field.

'Wait, what was her name?' "MER!" He shouted. "Hey Merida!"

She turned then, giving him a confused look. "Aye?"

He exited the field and walked towards her. "I'm starving."

"And?" She said, wondering why that mattered.

"I'm going to pick up Hic and grab a bite to eat. Wanna come?"

Merida scratched her head. She was often wary about boys. Back home, they treated her like a prize to be won. But Jack didn't seem that way. And food was involved. "Ookeh, I'll go."

They walked towards the school.

"Have y'been on the team long?" Merida said. Her eyes were on the ground.

"Since Freshman year. " Jack grinned. "A rare feat apparently."

Merida raised a eyebrow. "Oh really? Are y' any good?"

Jack crossed his arms. "I don't mean to brag but...I have been featured in the town paper as a Burgess rising star."

"What's that?"

"A local merit the town gives out. You can get one for various reasons. A heroic deed, volunteer work, academics, unbelievable athletic prowess..." He said, smiling. "Random stuff. "

They continued walking. In a effort to break the silence, Merida spoke again. "Practice looked fun."

Jack stared at her. "Fun? What part of that looks fun?"

Merida shrugged. "Don't you enjoy the sport? "

Jack laughed. "Of course! But Shang can take the fun out of it sometimes. Once you have to deal with him, everything is work. "

"I think I could handle it. Maybe Ah'll try out."

Jack stopped walking. "You?"

Merida continued to walk. "Y'think Ah can't?"

Jack looked towards the field. "..."

Merida put her hands on her hips. "Well?"

Jack thought about his all boy team. "I guess you could...Question is, are you any good?"

Merida shrugged. "Ahm good at other sports. Ah could learn."

Jack raised an eyebrow. "Yeah..." He thought about it for a moment. "I guess you could be...with a good teacher."

"Yeah?" Merida smirked. "Do you know anyone good?"

They entered Burgess high. Soft music and chatter could be heard from a distant room.

"I think they're in the gym." Jack said.

Merida looked around. "..."

"So Mer, when do you start?"

It was almost four, and there were two more hours of sunlight. Nevertheless, and her students were still painting.

Most of the wall had been completed by the time Jack and Merida walked in.

"Ah!" greeted them with a smile. "Hello and welcome! Grab a paintbrush! We're almost done!"

"Hi Tooth." Jack gave her a nod. "This is Mer, a new transfer student."

Merida extended a hand. "Name's Merida, pleased to meet you."

"Welcome to Burgess! " Ms. Ana shook her hand. "Where are you transferring from? "

Merida found her enthusiasm rather...surprising. Jack left them to finish their introductions.

"Jack! " Rapunzel waved to him.

Hiccup gave him a nod and continued to paint. "We're basically finished." He said, facing the wall. "You can help, if you want."

Jack rubbed his neck. He set his things down. "Alright. Let's finish this."

It was another twenty minutes before they left Burgess high.

"I'm starving!" Jack whined, as they walked across the parking lot. "What about you Hic? I told Merida we would get something to eat after this."

Hiccup nodded. "Okay. We can go to my house if you want. "

"Awesome! " Jack said, taking out his keys. "You're coming too, right Goldie?"

"Huh?" Rapunzel played with her hair. " I don't know...I promised mother I would go straight home."

Jack clasped his hands together. "Please?"

Rapunzel bit her lip. "..."

"I'll drive you home after, promise."

"Drop me off too while you're at it." Merida said.

Rapunzel sighed. "Okay."

Merida...yay...um...we're in the second part now...Let's see if you can guess what the pattern is...

11. Chapter 11

Chapter: Cooking with Rapunzel.

Warning for vegetarians...?: Meat description? Does that bother anyone?

Hiccup took his usual spot in the passenger seat, while Merida and Rapunzel climbed into the back seat.

Jack put the key in the ignition and turned on the heat.

"Nice car." Merida said.

"It's really comfy. " Rapunzel added.

"Glad you like it, ladies." Jack said, before leaning close to Hiccup and saying. "See? This car is great for picking up chicks."

Merida punched his arm. "Ooh really?"

"Ouch!" Jack rubbed his arm. "I was only kidding, Red I swear. "

He looked at Hiccup. "Right Hic?"

Hiccup looked out the window. "I like my arm the way it is, unbruised, so I will say nothing. "

Rapunzel laughed. "Good answer. "

They drove to Hiccup's house, chatting all the while. When they arrived the house was empty except for Toothless, who was watching a nature documentary in the living room.

Merida paused before entering the room. "Is that cat watching television? "

Jack took off his sweatshirt. "Do you mind if I use your shower.

Hiccup, who was having a flashback to the night he stripped Jack down, simply blushed and stammered, "G-Go ahead. "

Merida stared at the two of them for a moment. "Hm..."

Rapunzel entered the kitchen. "What should we have?"

Merida raised a hand. "Ah vote fer meat."

Jack laughed. "I second that."

Hiccup looked in the fridge. "I have ham, ribs, ground beef, steaks, pork chops..." He shrugged. "You're gonna have to be a little more specific. "

"We can make burgers with the beef." Rapunzel said. "What do you think?"

"Sounds good." Jack said, grabbing his bag and heading upstairs.

Merida stood and entered the kitchen. "Ah haven't had one yet since I got this country."

Hiccup smiled. "You're in for a treat then." He grabbed a large bowl from the cupboard.

Jack ran himself a hot shower, stripped off his clothes, and got in. Like the rest of the house, the shower was also big, making him feel tiny. He stood with his hair under the showerhead for a moment. His legs ached. There was a bruise from a accidental shove during a practice match. The shower gel smelled like honeysuckle and spice. A smile crossed Jack's face. 'Is the hairy hooligan running around smelling like honeysuckle?'

He let the warm water wash over him for a few minutes more before drying himself off. He pulled a pair of grey sweats and a blue sweatshirt from his bag, shrugged them on, and headed back downstairs. A wonderful aroma was wafting from the kitchen. Merida and Toothless were sitting in the living room with their eyes glued to the screen. Hiccup and Rapunzel were in the kitchen.

"Hey Jack, do you want your buns toasted?" Hiccup asked, trying to keep a straight face.

Jack snickered. "My buns are pretty toasty already."

Hiccup blushed at that, and Jack laughed.

Rapunzel called to Merida, "Do you want cheese?"

"Aye!" Merida responded.

Soon the four of them were eating in the living room. Rapunzel watched the clock with a wary eye. Toothless walked around their feet, waiting for something to drop. Hiccup found himself sandwiched between Rapunzel and Jack.

"Great as usual Hic." Jack said, taking another bite out of his burger.

Hiccup looked away. "Rapunzel made them too."

Rapunzel took her eyes off the clock. "But you did the seasoning. I just shaped them."

Jack turned to Merida. "What do you think, Red?"

"A plus." Merida said, wiping off her chin with the back of her hand. "A beautiful collection of calories." She took another bite. "May I ask yeh somethin' Jack?"

Jack shrugged. "Go ahead. Shoot."

"Are yeh bad with names, or just the nickname type?"

"The nickname type." Jack replied with a mouth full of meat.

"You get used to it." Hiccup said.

Rapunzel frowned at the clock. "It's getting late."

Merida looked at her. "Yer leaving?"

Rapunzel stood and picked up her plate. "Mother will be worried if I come home too late. She doesn't like me being out after dark."

"But you can't go." Jack said, pouting. "If you go, I have to go. Besides, Harry hasn't found out he's a wizard yet." He said, looking at the television.

Rapunzel sat down. "Fine." She crossed her arms. "But I'm leaving after the sorting hat."

By the time Harry caught the golden snitch, someone rang Hiccup's bell.

Hiccup jumped up to get the door, with Toothless following him. The cat hissed at the door. Hiccup looked out the peephole to see a not so familiar face. His visitor was a middle aged woman with dark, curly hair. Her skin was pale, as if she had not seen the sun, even long before the winter months. Her face was caked with makeup.

He opened the door slowly. "Hello. Can I help you?"

"Is this the home of...Hiccup Haddock?"

"Yeah, that's me."

A low, guttural growl came from Toothless. Hiccup nudged the cat with his foot.

"Cool it bud."

The woman crossed her arms. "Is Rapunzel here?" She said, taking a step forward.

"Huh? Oh, you must be her Mom. She was just about to leave Miss-"

"Gothel." She said, walking into the home. "Rapunzel!" She called, in a sing-song voice. "It's time to go home dear!"

Rapunzel jumped at the sound of her name. She stood, tripped on her hair, and scrambled out of the room.

Mother Gothel walked straight towards her.

"Mother I am so sorry. I was going to leave but-"

"It's my fault." Jack said, standing. "I promised to take her and Merida home. It's nice to see you again, Miss Gothel."

"Well if it isn't North's son, Jackson."

Jack poured on his usual charm. "Please, call me Jack. And may I say thank you for your patronage."

"Oh, look at you, smoozing customers early." She looked at Rapunzel. "We're leaving. "

Rapunzel nodded. "Yes, mother." She hurriedly put on her coat and gloves. "Goodbye everyone."

Hiccup held the door open as they left. "Yeah, see you at school."

"Bye Goldie." Jack said.

"It was nice seeing you." Merida said.

Gothel sighed as Hiccup closed the door. They walked across the lawn and up the road. "Really Rapunzel, what were you thinking, staying out late with those hooligans. I thought you told me you were going to go paint at school or something."

"I did, Mother. We finished the mural today."

"Yes I heard. "

"Then why did you ask?"

"I dropped by your school after dusk, and it was closed."

"But how did you know where I was?"

"I ran into one of your...classmates. The one in all black."

"Mavis?"

"Yes, I think that was her name. Creepy little thing..."

"Mavis is NOT creepy-"

Gothel poked her in the chest. "And you are not to be trusted!"

"But-"

"Out with strange boys!"

"I-"

"Probably up to no good!"

"Mother-"

"I don't want to hear it Rapunzel! I will be picking you up from school from now on!"

Hiccup returned to the living room.

"Okay." Jack said. "Am I the only one who thinks Rapunzel's mom is weird?"

"A wee bit high strung." Merida said. "But to be fair, she should have called."

Jack looked at the clock. "It's not even eight!"

Hiccup shrugged. "Some parents are like that."

Jack settled back into the couch. "I don't know...I mean I've seen her around the store. She goes through makeup like it's water, and she can't ever stop looking at her reflection."

Well Ah don't know about that." Merida said. "But Ah did notice something off."

"What?" Hiccup asked.

"When she was talking...She kept looking at Rapunzel's hair, not her face."

"Everyone, this is Merida DunBroch. She just transferred here all the way from Ireland-"

"Scotland. " Merida corrected.

"Scotland", the teacher said. The bell rang, signifying homeroom was over. "Well class please welcome her to Burgess!"

The teens rose from their seats, heading to their classes. Merida looked at her schedule and sighed. She had tripped on her dress twice already. It was going to be a long day.

At lunch she was glad to see Rapunzel waving her down. Sitting with her were Jack and Hiccup. Jack was comparing their winter schedules.

"So it looks like we have lunch and art together. " Jack said.

Meerida sat down next to Rapunzel. "Hello."

"Hey Red." Jack looked up at her. "How's your first day going?"

"Not too bad. The classes are easier than Ah thought they would be."

"Yeah?" Jack said. "Let me see your schedule. You started school right on time for winter sesh."

She passed her paper to him.

"It looks like you have art with us." Hiccup said.

"Wow!" Rapunzel exclaimed. "So we all have class together after this."
"

Merida smiled. 'At least Ah have a few friendly faces.'

Back home she had always felt ostracized from her peers. As heir to the DunBroch fortune, she had been raised to be ready to take over the business. She knew that one day she would return to Scotland to build her family's empire. But for now, she could be an ordinary girl.

"Were you serious the other day Red?" Jack said.

"About what?" Rapunzel asked.

"Oh that." Merida said, biting an apple. "Ahm thinking about trying for lacrosse."

"Really?" Hiccup was surprised. As a child in Berk, it wasn't a big deal for girls to play sports. "Would Coach Shang even allow that?"

"He will if she's good." Jack said. "And she will be, with the right teacher."

"Oh yeah, Ah need a good player to learn from." Merida raised an eyebrow. "Do you know anyone Jack?"

Jack pretended to look offended, then smirked. "I know just the guy. Strong, handsome, described as 'indispensable to the team' in the local paper..."

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "Was modest written there too?"

Jack frowned. "You would think it would've been. Alas, it was not."

"Okay Jackson." Merida said. "You've convinced me. Mold me in your image, oh great one."

It wasn't long before they were heading up to art. Ms. Ana's art room was filled with empty easels and stools. The smell of fresh paint lingered in the air, as the previous class' work dried in the corner.

Hiccup began wandering towards the front, only to have Jack grab his hand and pull him towards the back. Rapunzel and Merida followed suit.

Hiccup said nothing, staring at Jack's hand. 'He's so cold...'

Jack pulled Hiccup to the corner and dropped his bag. Personal space was never an issue to him. He pulled up a stool and began to sit.

"Jack."

"Hm?" He looked at Hiccup, who's face was slightly flushed. 'Is he sick?'

"My...h-hand..."

"Oh." Jack let him go. The sudden loss of warmth seemed nostalgic. 'There was that other time. When he pulled me out of the snow.'

Hiccup looked at Jack, then at the floor. 'Why is he staring at me like that?! Is he upset or something?'

Merida sat at the easel to Jack's left and watched the exchange with a sigh. 'Well, this is going to be interesting indeed.'

Rapunzel sat at Hiccup's right. 'This is nice. Merida and Jack did nice work helping us paint. I wonder if they can draw, too.'

Once the classroom filled up, Ms. Ana took attendance and announced the day's lesson. "Okay guys. I see some old friends and new faces in here, so we're going to do a little ice breaker. I'm going to break you off into pairs. Half of you will be models. As for the rest of you, your job is to draw your partner..." She grinned. "As a animal! It'll be fun to see what you come up with and, I'll get a good sense of what I should teach you next! Now let's see... Model Eilonwy with Taran...Arthur and Model Ella...Rapunzel with-"

Rapunzel looked at Hiccup. ' I wonder what he would draw me as. I could try making him a dragon...'

"Model Merida."

Rapunzel looked at Merida, who looked back at her, shrugging.

"Model Hiccup with-"

Hiccup looked up from his backpack. "Huh?"

"Jack. Giselle with model..."

Jack smiled at Hiccup. "Hey partner."

Stools and easels were moved and dragged until everyone was properly seated.

Hiccup sat on his chair, hands in his pockets, trying to not be bothered by the fact that Jack would be staring at him for the next forty minutes.

In an effort to ease the tension, Hiccup relied on his most valuable weapon: humor. "Try to capture my heroic physique. I know it's hard."

Jack laughed, looking from Hiccup to his notebook. "Don't worry, I'm not as good as you or Rapunzel, but I have mastered the art of stick figures."

Jack continued to draw, looking up at Hiccup every now and then. Hiccup shifted uncomfortably on his chair, rubbing his arm every now and then. While he had not known Hiccup very long, Jack was beginning

to pick up on Hiccup's little nuances.

He rubbed his arm if he was nervous, he bit his bottom if he thought something was funny. He wouldn't make eye contact with anyone for more than ten seconds, and he puffed his cheeks out if he was irritated.

In fact, when he did that he kind of looked like a€|.

Sudden inspiration struck, causing Jack to erase what he started and began again.

Ms. Ana walked around the room and critiqued the work of her students, and gave praise as well. After another twenty minutes, Jack was done, and very pleased with his work.

"It's finished." He said, crossing his arms and grinning.

By this time Ms. Ana had made her way to Jack's easel. She looked at it and gave a squeal of surprise. Jack laughed. "I know. Perfect, right?"

Rapunzel and Merida walked over to see Jack's work.

Rapunzel gasped in surprise. "It is like him."

Merida laughed. "It's perfect!"

Hiccup felt a sense of dread. "What is it?"

Other classmates wandered over to see Jack's work and compared it to Hiccup, who sat on his chair looking slightly confused. After a moment he gave in and got up to see Jack's work. And what he saw was a squirrel. A baby squirrel. Wearing a horned helmet with fur trim.

Hiccup stared at the image for a moment. He wasn't sure what he was expecting. He wasn't sure what Jack had been feeling. He blinked twice and tried to process a meaning from the image.

"A squirrel." Hiccup finally said, after a moment of silence.

"A Viking squirrel." Jack corrected.

Hiccup took a deep breath.

Jack tilted his head to the side. "You don't like it?"

Hiccup didn't answer him.

AH AHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA WAT.

There were three cameos: Taran and Eilonwy from the black cauldron (good book series, ok disney movie) and Arthur (The sword in the stone)

12. Chapter 12

Two negatives make a positive. Squirrels.

I learned the importance of taking good class notes today. And not doodling pictures all over them. How old am I again? Do not draw and write fanfiction in your notes. I'm serious.

This chapter is dedicated to the creative team that gave us Stitch and Toothless. High five, you two.

Chapter: Babysitting with Rapunzel

Jack followed Hiccup out of the classroom. "Why do I get the feeling you were less than thrilled about my drawing?"

Hiccup stared ahead, walking to his next class. "It isn't like that."

Jack grabbed him by the hand, making Hiccup turn and face him.

"Then what is it like?"

"It's just...a squirrel, Jack? Really? "

"What's wrong with squirrels? Squirrels are cute."

Hiccup's eyes widened. ' Squirrels are cute. He drew me as a squirrel. No, Hiccup. Asgard to Hiccup, come in Hiccup.'

Hiccup began to have an internal meltdown, worrying Jack.

"Hic?" 'Don't tell me I messed this up...'

"I don't...not like it." Hiccup finally said, rubbing his arm.

"You used a double negative." Jack said, looking deflated. "You hate it."

"No I don't! I swear! I just..." 'Strongly disliked it.' "Feel a little embarrassed. "

"Oh." Jack scratched his head. "Sorry."

Hiccup bit his lip, trying not to smile. Jack was cute when he was apologetic.

"It's not a big deal."

"Okay. " Jack said, unconvinced. "I'll see you after school?"

"Yeah, see you then."

"Can yeh do me a favor, Hiccup?"

"Yeah?" It was just another afternoon when Merida called Hiccup after school. She sounded slightly distressed.

"Ah was going to meet Jack at the park to play lacrosse." She began. "But when Ah got home Ah found that my mum had gone out and left the triplets, so..."

"You need someone to watch the triplets? "

"Yeah." She sighed. "Ah don't suppose yer not busy..."

"Well..." Hiccup glanced at his desk. A half finished Nightfury stared back with one eye. "Not really, no."

"Great! We're going to drop by with them."

Hiccup had seen the boys in action before. "Wait, I have a idea..."

"Can you do me a favor, Rapunzel? "

Rapunzel gripped the cordless phone a little tighter. A call from anyone was unexpected, but a call from Hiccup was unprecedented.

"Do you need help with something Hiccup?"

"Yeah. Merida and Jack are going to go play lacrosse in the park and they need someone to watch the triplets. I said I would do it but, I don't think I can handle them by myself. "

"Oh." Rapunzel had seen the triplets terrorize a woman in the grocery store once. "Well, I think I can manage that. Mother is out today. Oh, where are we watching them?"

"The park. It's sunny today, and I figured they could use the exercise. "

"Okay. That sounds good. What time?"

"Jack can pick you up in twenty minutes."

"Okay, I'll make snacks!"

"Alright Red. Feet spread apart, keep a tight grip on the stick."

Merida stood her ground in a pair of sweats and a green vest. Protective pads covered her knees and elbows. "Isn't there a fancier name fer this than a stick?"

Jack folded his arms. "Alright keep a grip on the d-pole then."

"Ahm not calling it that."

"Then we're back to stick. Either way, learn to make it part of yourself. A quick pass or a sudden shove can make or break a game."

"We can shove? You mean it's like Shinty*?"

"Uh...Yeah. But don't worry about that. All you have to think about is getting that ball into the other team's goal."

"So this is like football with sticks. "

"Soccer? "

"Er, right. Soccer."

"Yeah. You could say they're similar..."

Not too far from Merida and Jack, Rapunzel and Hiccup were trying to keep the triplets busy.

"Hamish! Please don't climb on that man." Rapunzel said, sighing.

"Ahm Hubert!" The boy said, jumping off the mailman.

"Harris!" Hiccup said as he pulled a pinecone out of Hamish's mouth. "Do not lick that stick!"

"Ahm hungry!" Harris whined.

"Me too!" Hubert chimed in.

Hamish tugged on Rapunzel's lavender coat. "Do you have any more sandwiches? "

"Nope." Rapunzel shook her head. "Sorry. "

Jack ran, stick in hand. "Alright Red, try to keep up with me!"

Merida ran after him. "Slow down! Yer running like the devil's after yeh!"

"Negative Red! Come on, you have to do better than that! "

Merida swallowed hard. The air was chilly, and the wind was picking up. She sprinted ahead, crashing into Jack.

"Careful Red! Hit me too hard and it's a foul!"

"Let's see if Jack and Merida are ready for a break." Hiccup said, looking across the thawed grass.

"We can all go have hot chocolate or something. " Rapunzel said.

"Hot chocolate! " Hamish cheered.

"Let's get Merida! " Harris yelled.

The three boys ran across the grass.

"Hey!" Hiccup yelled. "Wait!"

Merida smacked Jack's stick, trying to get him to fumble.

"Nice try." Jack said, shifting his weight to the left at the last moment. Merida tripped over his foot.

"Hey!"

"Look out for dirty tactics!" Jack said. "You-"

His coaching was drowned out by the shouts of the DunBroch brothers.

They threw Jack to the ground, piling up on top him.

"Look Merida!" "We won!" "Can we eat now?"

Merida crossed her arms. "Boys! What did Mum say about dogpiling!? Get off him."

They reluctantly got off of Jack, who was wearing an expression as if he had just gotten hit by a car.

Hiccup offered him his hand. "Are you alright?"

Jack stared at Hiccup for a moment before taking Hiccup's hand, and dragging him to the ground.

"Hey!"

Jack laughed. "One day you'll stop falling for that."

Hiccup sighed. "And maybe one day it'll be funny."

He stood again.

"Hey." Jack crossed his arms. "Aren't you going to help me up?"

"Nope. You had your chance." He looked at Merida. "Ready for a break?"

Merida nodded. "Aye. Let's eat."

Jack stood. "What're we having?"

Rapunzel shrugged. "I don't have any cash."

Jack crossed his arms. "We could try Tiana's place then."

It was only moments later that the triplets were gobbling down beignets**.The decor of Tiana's had real southern charm. Large green lamps made of blown glass sat on every table. The floor decorated with a swirling emerald pattern. Large stone columns held the ceiling up while jazz music played.

Rapunzel took a large gulp from her bowl. "This is great! I've never had gumbo before. "

They sat at a large round table covered with a wine colored tablecloth. True, the group looked slightly out of place, but anyone and everyone was welcome at Tiana's place.

"This is nice." Merida said, smiling.

"If you think this is great, you should see Tiana's palace down in New Orleans." Jack said. "I've seen pictures, and I hear it's a party every night there."

A waitress walked up to their table. "Do you guys need anything else? Oh, hi Hiccup."

Hiccup looked up from his plate. "Oh, hey Nani. How's it

going?"

Nani put her hands on her hips. "Pretty good. I managed to get hired here. It's been hard ever since that incident."

Hiccup laughed nervously. "Ha. Yeah...Oh, guys this is my neighbor, Nani."

Jack looked up at her.

Nani was in her late teens, with brown skin and black wavy shoulder length hair. She had moved to Burgess from Hawaii a year prior due to a scholarship at Munster University.

"Nice to meet you." Jack said. "I feel like we've met before..."

Nani shrugged. "I've had a lot of part-time jobs around town."

"Did you work at North's ?"

Nani suddenly looked nervous. "Well.."

"I remember you now! You're the girl with that dog!"

Nani sighed. Jack was referring to a incident that had occurred earlier in the year, during which her sister's pet went on a rampage through the perfume department. She had been fired on the spot.

"That's me." Nani said, sighing. "The one with the crazy dog."

Hiccup shook his head. Her dog and Toothless were two of a kind.

"How is Lilo?"

"She's still adjusting. " Nani said, shaking her head.

"Oh." Hiccup shrugged. "Well, another two years to go right?"

Nani groaned. "I hope not. I'm trying to finish this degree as soon as possible. Do you guys need anything? "

There was a collection of shrugs and happy mumbling.

"Alright. See you around, Hiccup."

Hiccup stared at the paper. He had been sketching and erasing his latest idea, the nightfury, for about an hour. There were things he was certain of: it was black, it spit fire. But, there were other things he wasn't so sure of. Hiccup sighed and got up. He stretched, and turned to Toothless, who was kneading into Hiccup's duvet. "What do you think bud? Skinny arms? Big scales?"

The bell rang.

Hiccup headed downstairs. "Coming!"

He opened the door to find Nani looking frantic.

"Uh, Hiccup I know this is really short notice, but I was wondering if you could look after Lilo for a few hours and-"

A football went soating through Nani's closed window and tumbled cross her lawn. "Maybe keep her from burning the house down?"

Hiccup rubbed his arm, "Just a few hours?"

Nani nodded. "Yeah! I just have to take this test and it takes a hour to get to school..."

Hiccup took a deep breath. "I...guess."

"Great! I'll be back before you know it!"

Hiccup entered the Pelekai house with a open mind. Lilo wasn't a bad child. She was just different from other children. He found her in the living room, laying on the floor with her arms crossed. She tilted her head in his direction. "You're not the babysitter."

"Well..." Hiccup shrugged. "Nani sent me over to watch you for a little while. "

Lilo uncrossed her arms. "Okay."

Hiccup looked around. The Pelekai home was much smaller than his own. There were pictures here and there but not much furniture or knick-nacks. He figured Nani and Lilo weren't too attached to the house.

"So..Wanna do something? "

Lilo sat up. "I dunno. What do you wanna do?"

Hiccup thought about it for a moment. What did seven year olds like to do?

"We could...color."

Hiccup dragged his old coloring set over to Lilo's house. They sat on the floor, surrounded by crayons and construction paper. Lilo's dog, stitch was sitting on the couch. Hiccup tried not to think about Stitch too much. There were many things about Stitch that were a bit off. Like the fact that he was blue. And walked on two legs often. And sounded like he was talking in a foreign language whenever he barked.

"So what're you drawing Lilo?"

"My house." Lilo said, not looking up. "My real house, back in Kauai."

"Is there really a spaceship sticking out of it?"

"Yeah. After Uncle Jumba fixed the house we used it for a uh, expansion. "

"...I see."

"What're you drawing?"

"A Dragon."

"A dragon?" Lilo repeated, moving closer.

"Well, I'm trying. Y'see, there are all types of dragons. I'm trying to draw one of the most elusive ones. I know what he can do, I just don't know what he's like."

"What kind of dragon."

"It's called a Nightfury. Cloaked in darkness, it hunts its prey at night. No living soul has seen one, and that's why I don't know what it looks like. "

"Have you seen other dragons?"

"Yes, and no. I mean we have legends about them in Berk, that's the island I come from. My family and friends are the descendants of vikings who apparently followed dragons to the new world and settled after defeating them."

"Woow." Lilo gasped. "That's cool. But why did they hunt them in the first place?"

"I dunno. If it were me, I would want to make friends with them."

"You mean you would train a dragon, like a dog?"

"I guess. Yeah."

"You probably could train a dragon. I trained Stitch to act like a dog when company comes over."

Hiccup looked at Stitch, who said, "Oonagaquitsa boobaba." And went to the kitchen.

"So Lilo, if Stitch isn't a dog, what is he?"

"Nani said not to tell. Its a secret. "

A chill ran down Hiccup's spine. "Oh. Okay then."

"So can the nightfury fly?"

"Yeah. And it shoots glowing fire from it's mouth."

"Is it green or purple?" Lilo asked.

"I think the fire is purple or blue. And its a really fast when it flies."

"So it should be kinda like a bird, then."

"I suppose you're right. A streamlined body type."

"Yeah." Lilo nodded. "To cut down on wind resistance. "

"Maybe something like...this?"

"He needs bigger ears, to hear stuff better."

"You're right. Like a cat."

"Like Toothless. " Hiccup said, furrowing his brow. "Hm..."

"You wanna eat something, Lilo?"

"Okay. Nani left money for pizza."

Stitch inhaled two slices. A Elvis record was playing.

Hiccup stared at the ceiling. "Well, this is nice."

"You're different from the other people Nani leaves me with." Lilo said, dipping her pizza slice in juice. "You didn't ask why Stitch is blue. "

"Well, I figure that's not my business."

"He's always been blue. Jumba made him that way."

"So...what's Hawaii like?"

"It's nice. And warm..."Lilo said, staring at the television.

"Everyday was fun. We went surfing almost everyday. We found homes for Stitch's cousins...And David would take us places all the time. We went to Graceland. It was amazing. "

"Really? You like Elvis a lot, hun."

"The King? Of course!" Lilo exclaimed.

Hiccup laughed.

"You ready to draw the nightfury again?" Lilo asked.

"Alright. Let's give it another shot."

"I think there should be more weight in his legs." Hiccup said.

"Yeah, but make sure the claws are pointy."Lilo added.

Hiccup sat up and observed the room. He and Lilo had made quite a mess.

"What do you say we clean this up and do something fun?"

"Fun?"

Lilo and Stitch laughed hysterically as they bounced up and down on the trampoline in Hiccup's backyard. Hiccup never had a use for the thing, and he wasn't exactly sure why they owned a trampoline in the first place. He let them have their fun for another twenty minutes before bringing them inside.

Hiccup's doorbell rang.

"Oh, hey Nani."

"Where's Lilo?"

"She and Stitch are in the livingroom. I brought them over to play on the trampoline, I hope that's okay."

"Yeah, that's great."

Hiccup stepped back. "Please, come in."

Nani found Lilo and Stitch in the livingroom with Toothless.

Nani looked around. There was no damage. Lilo was sitting still, and Stitch was acting like a dog.

She looked at Hiccup. He had no bite marks. His clothes were still intact.

"Have they been like this all day?"

"Yeah." Hiccup nodded. "Why?"

Toothless had a float in the parade. It was cool. Yup.

DunBroch is in Scotland. So yes, the land of scotch.

Shiny-Scottish game somewhat similar to lacrosse.

** dough, fried, covered with sugar

13. Chapter 13

There's another trailer out for Htttyd 2.

Chapter: Movies with Rapunzel

"Do you think we need cocoa powder?" Rapunzel asked.

"I don't think so." Hiccup replied.

It was already the end of January. As promised, Hiccup was helping Rapunzel with the Bake sale. However, Rapunzel's oven had miraculously stopped working properly right before the sale. As a result, Rapunzel had to beg her mother to let her out of the house and get the bsking done at someone else's house. The idea of Rapunzel hanging around young men bothered her, so Rapunzel promised to do the cooking at Merida's place. Jack, pleased with Merida's progress, agreed that Merida could spend her time on such 'mundane activity' and drove them to the supermarket for ingredients.

Hiccup looked over a stand of flour. "Hm..."

Further down the aisle, Jack and Merida were amusing themselves by having a fake sword fight with long baguettes.

"I've had enough of you, Peter Pan!" Merida said, swinging the loaf of bread.

Jack dodged and laughed. "Give it up Hook and hand Wendy over!"

Standing in for 'Wendy' was a box of cereal.

"Guys, come on." Hiccup said, sighing. "Help us find this stuff. The sooner we're done, the sooner we leave."

Rapunzel, happy to be out of the house again, was filling the cart with necessary and unnecessary items.

"What about chilli pepper? Do you think we need chilli pepper to give the spice cake a little kick?"

"Nah." Hiccup said, shaking his head. "I think we want people to enjoy the food."

Jack tossed the box of cereal into the cart. "You seem extra snarky today Hic. What happened? "

What had happened was a dream that Hiccup had last night. It had the usual elements, dragons, Vikings, and Heimdall watching from Asgard. He was in the middle of a heated battle, riding on the back of a magnificent nightfury. Everything was normal until someone shouted, "Jokul Frosti!"

Sure enough, the clouds parted and there he was, touching down on the ground. All fighting ceased. Hiccup sat frozen, watching the battlefield from atop Toothless.

It wasn't weird for real people to show up in Hiccup's dreams. His family and friends usually blended in to his fantasies. But this time was different. Jack was dressed in his blue hoodie, khakis, and sneakers. He held his lacrosse stick across his shoulders as he surveyed the field. Hiccup's dream started to break apart then, and just as something cold hit Hiccup's face, he jolted awake realizing he had fallen out of bed.

It was because of this dream that Hiccup could not look Jack in the eye for most of the day and yes, was extra snarky.

Hiccup shook his head. "It's nothing. We just need to get some eggs and some baking powder. Then we're done. "

By the time they all got into Jack's car Hiccup was tired. He leaned his head on the cold glass of the door's window.

Merida observed him from the backseat. "Are yeh alright Heccup? Y'look sort of green."

"I'm fine..." Hiccup said, removing his forehead from the glass. Jack reached over and pressed his hand on Hiccup's face.

"You feel kinda hot." Jack said.

Hiccup fidgeted, and pushed his hand away. "Well you're freezing."

Jack smiled. "Yeah, people always tell me I'm cold. That's why they call me Jack Frost. "

Rapunzel smiled. "Really? I thought it was joke. You know, because you're so cool."

"Nah." Jack made a turn. "North called me Jack Frost when I was kid, because I preferred the cold. It sort of stuck."

It wasn't long before they reached the DunBroch residence. It was a large house like Hiccup's, but with a sprawling lawn and long driveway. Merida's mother had enrolled the triplets in karate classes at a neighbor's suggestion. This left the DunBroch home strangely quiet in the afternoon, and Merida more than happy to have company over.

The DunBroch home also had old world charm. A tapestry was hung on the wall in the living room, depicting the history of Merida's family. Pictures of their castle sat on a table in the entryway.

After hanging up their coats, they went to the kitchen.

"Your house is beautiful Merida!" Rapunzel said, observing a statue made of blown glass. "Everything is so nice."

"Aye." Merida said, grabbing a mug from the cupboard. "And full of Scottish pride. Make yourself at home. "

Jack looked in the fridge. "Don't mind if I do. You got any hotpockets?"

"Those things are terrible for you." Hiccup said.

Rapunzel held up a box of ziti. "Why don't we eat before we bake? You know, to take the edge off. "

Rapunzel put water on to boil for pasta. Hiccup retrieved a jar of sauce from the refrigerator. Jack, who stood at the kitchen's entrance, laughed.

"What?" Hiccup said, as he chopped garlic.

Jack looked at Rapunzel and then Hiccup. "Oh, nothing." He left the kitchen and went to the livingroom. 'I might as well do the reading for English.' He found Merida sitting on the couch, with the assigned book in hand. After getting his book, he sat in a armchair. 'Great minds think alike, I guess.'

Soon the smell of garlic wafted from the kitchen, and the four of them gathered in Merida's dining room.

"Mum has a fit if you eat in the living room. " Merida explained.

"This is nice." Rapunzel said, smiling. "We should all do something together. "

"You mean like right now?" Jack said.

Rapunzel shook her head, laughing. "No! I mean like, a picnic or a movie or something. "

"Well, that new hero flick is coming out " Jack replied. "You wanna go see it?"

After a while they were sitting on the couch discussing movies when Hiccup looked at a clock on the wall. "Uh, guys, I think we're losing focus."

Rapunzel sighed. "You're right. Let's get baking!"

"Pass me the baking soda Rapunzel.
"

"Okay."

"..."

"Um..."

"..."

Jack and Merida had went to practice in the backyard. It was just Hiccup and Rapunzel in the house. All alone...

'Quick Rapunzel! Say something, anything!'

"That's a nice...sweater..."

Hiccup looked up. He was wearing a t-shirt. "Did you say something?"

"Huh?! Oh no...no. I was talking to myself..."

Hiccup put a tray of cupcakes into the oven. "Okay."

Rapunzel bit her lip. The silence was almost deafening. They had come a long way from just chatting in passing or during club hours. Now they were hanging out, going to restaurants...the time to act was now. She had to keep pushing.

"So how is Toothless? "

"He's okay. He's probably taking a nap somewhere he shouldn't right now. "

Rapunzel laughed. "Probably. "

Jack tiptoed back into the house, he took a peek into the kitchen, and found Hiccup and Rapunzel laughing at something. Grinning, he went back out to the backyard.

"We're not going to the movies next Saturday, Red."

"What!?" Merida exclaimed. "But why?"

Jack shrugged. "Okay we are, but we just aren't going to go together. Let me explain. "

By the time Rapunzel was putting frosting on the cupcakes Jack and Merida returned the kitchen. Merida looked slightly irritated, while Jack was grinning like a madman.

"We're done. " Hiccup said, washing his hands at the sink.

"I made the cupcakes and the cake pops, Hiccup did the spice cake and the cookies." Rapunzel explained, beaming proudly.

"You guys make a good team...in the kitchen. " Jack said, taking a cookie off the cooling rack.

Rapunzel smiled, looking at the counter. Merida looked from her to Hiccup, who was putting the cookies into boxes. He swatted Jack's hand away with a spoon. "Hey! We can't sell them if you keep eating them!"

Jack swallowed. "You should make me a batch then."

Merida grabbed a cookie for herself. "These are good, Heccup. You'll make a good wife someday."

Hiccup blushed. "W-Wife?"

"That better not be a proposal, Red." Jack said. " 'Cause I totally have dibs on Hiccup."

"Huh!?" Hiccup was growing extremely uncomfortable.

"No way! "Rapunzel said, crossing her arms. "I've known him the longest!"

"Fine." Jack said, pretending to be defeated. "But you have to invite me over for breakfast like, alllllll the time. "

Merida laughed. "Is food all you're worried about?"

Rapunzel giggled, Jack looked offended. Hiccup laughed nervously and looked at the tray of cookies.

That night, Hiccup had another strange dream. Only this time, no Dragons, Vikings, or battles were involved. Instead, in the dream, Hiccup woke up in a large bed and checked the time. He had to make breakfast now, while there was still time. He headed to a spacious kitchen and started working on making pancakes. As he became absorbed in his work, a pair of arms grabbed him from behind. He turned slightly to see Jack, grinning at him.

"Stop!" A voice said. "This is wrong! "

There was another Hiccup in the room. A slightly younger Hiccup.

The older Hiccup took Jack's hand. "Why?"

"You can't do that! " The younger Hiccup protested. "He'll never accept you!"

Hiccup woke up, heart pounding. He wasn't sure why, but something about the dream scared him. He tried to shake it off all morning, but

it stayed on his it was time yo leave. After getting dressed he decided to walk to the movie theater, trying to clear his head.

"I can't make it to the movies Hiccup." Jack said, trying to sound as deflated and miserable as possible.

"Why?" Hiccup asked, cradling his cellphone to his ear.

"North has me doing customer service at the store. You and the girls will have to go without me."

"Oh..." 'Jack doesn't sound too happy.' "Do you want to postpone until next weekend?"

"I can't, Hic. The season is about to start. I'll have practice on the weekend from now on."

"Oh...Sorry."

"I'll catch it on cable or something. It's no big deal." Jack watched Hiccup from behind a large bush across the street. "Well, I gotta go. Bye."

"Bye."

Merida crossed her arms. "Are we really gonna follow them all day?"

"Yes, Red." Jack replied. "Yes."

Merida said. "Very well. My turn then."

Rapunzel waved to Hiccup as she crossed the street.

"Bad news." She said. "Merida had to cancel, she's watching the triplets. Where's Jack? "

"Working at the store. " Hiccup said. "I guess it's just us then."

Rapunzel swallowed hard. Just the two of them? Just her and Hiccup? It was like the other day in the kitchen, yet a hundred times worse. She tried to keep calm. "Y-Yeah...The two of us..."

Hiccup shrugged, trying to be nonchalant. Maybe it was better if he didn't see Jack right now. They entered the Burgess downtown theater. It was old building, a relic from a period in which new films were called 'talkies'. There were posters of big pictures like Gone with the Wind and the Wizard of Oz lining the walls of the entrance. The floor was covered in old red carpeting and creaked as Hiccup and Rapunzel walked up the ramp. Matinee tickets were only five dollars. Rapunzel held her crinkled five with a resolved heart. It had taken a entire week of begging to obtain it.

"I'll get the tickets. " Hiccup said. "Since its only the two of us."

Rapunzel nodded. "Oh, okay! I'll get snacks then." She hurried past him to the concession stand. There only two items on the menu: soda and popcorn. She bought a large of each and waited for Hiccup to

return from the ticket booth. After he reached her, they continued onward to theater three.

Hiccup stared blankly at the large screen. He wasn't watching the film at all. Instead, his mind was on the dream. What had it meant? He was certain he liked Jack. That was obvious. So what was the other Hiccup saying. 'Am I accepting the fact that I like Jack, but not accepting something else?' And then it hit him. 'Is it...because that would make me...' His stomach lurched. That was it. Hiccup sank in his seat. He had never liked a guy before, but then he only ever liked one other person. Astrid.

'But, it's not like I liked her because she was a girl. I liked her because she was...Astrid. The strongest, bravest person in Berk. It doesn't hurt that she's pretty too.' He bit his bottom lip. Would he have liked her if she was a boy? Would it have mattered?

'I don't like Jack because he's a guy. But I think...'

It wasn't right.

He knew now. It wasn't that the other Hiccup disagreed with what he wanted. It was about what someone else wanted.

"He'll never accept you!"

Stoick would never accept him. It was bad enough that he wasn't good at sports and spent his freetime drawing imaginary creatures. If, by some amazing coincidence, Jack liked him back Stoick would probably never speak to him again. Hiccup felt his eyes water. His hands began to tremble, and he stuffed them into his pockets. He stood, mumbling something incoherent to Rapunzel, and headed for the bathroom.

As he walked down the empty hallway, he picked up speed. He walked into the two stall bathroom and stood at the sink. He turned on the water and washed his face. Unrequited crushes were bad enough.

"Hic."

As he looked in the mirror, he nearly jumped out of his skin.

"Jack!"

"What are you doing!" Jack said, grabbing Hiccup by the shoulders. "Get back in there! At least hold her hand or something!"

Hiccup rubbed his eyes. "What?"

Jack continued. "I have put too much into this plan already Hiccup. You can not mess this up."

Hiccup narrowed his eyes at Jack. "What the hell are you talking about?"

"This. " Jack said. "This is your first quasi-date with Rapunzel."
"

Hiccup began to subconsciously shake his head. "No...You can't be

serious."

"The hell I'm not!" Jack began pushing him towards the door. "Now get back out there. "

Hiccup grabbed hold of the wall. "Are you insane? I don't even like her like that!"

"What's not to like!" Jack said, continuing to push. "She's perfect for you! Plus, she already likes you!"

"No she doesn't!" Hiccup said, holding onto the door for dear life.

"Yes she does!" Jack said, pushing harder. "I already confirmed it!"

"With who?"

"With Goldie herself! I asked her while you were in Berk!"

Hiccup let go of the wall, and the two of them fell.

Squished between Jack and the floor, Hiccup was still. "You did no such thing."

"Yeah, I did." Jack responded, pushing himself off of Hiccup.

Hiccup turned his head to side, not moving from the floor. Tears were threatening to well up in his eyes again. "Why?" He choked out.

As if things weren't complicated enough.

"Because...I don't know...I wanted you to be happy I guess."

Hiccup didn't look at him. He continued to lay on the floor arms crossed.

The look of disappointment hurt Jack more than he thought it would.

"Hiccup..."

Hiccup swallowed hard. This was getting ridiculous. Rapunzel liked him? Really?

For now, he would have to get off the floor before he could give the notion more thought.

Hiccup slowly rose, not taking Jack's hand.

"Hic?" There was enough worry in Jack's voice to make Hiccup feel even worse.

"I'll talk to her. For now, I'll go back inside."

Jack returned to his seat with a dazed look on his face. Merida looked at him.

"Are yeh alright Jack?"

"No, Red." He said, putting his head in his hands. "I'm not."

Hiccup glanced at Rapunzel, who was absorbed in watching the movie. Rapunzel was his friend. Just his friend. She was nice and pretty and smart. He liked her paintings. He liked her upbeat attitude. But he didn't like like her. The thought never crossed his mind.

"That's what happens when you meddle, Jack." Merida said, with her eyes glued to the screen. "I already knew Hiccup doesn't like Rapunzel that way."

Jack looked at her. "Well do you think you could've told me earlier?"

Merida continued to stare ahead. "You were too wrapped up in yer own plan to see it. Hiccup likes someone else."

"What? Who?"

Merida looked him in the eye. "You really can't tell, can you."

"Obviously not!" Jack said, glaring at her.

"Watch him." Merida said, taking a sip from her soda.

Rapunzel looked over at Hiccup. He was looking at her.

Her heart neatly skipped a beat. Hiccup looked away then.

'Why was he looking at me like that?! Is there something on my face?'

'Oh great, she caught me looking at her. How am I supposed to talk to her now? Why did Jack have to meddle like that!?'

Because Jack had thought he was doing the right thing. And just maybe, to him they looked like a good couple. Jack had wanted him to be happy.

He glanced at Rapunzel again. Wasn't she allowed to like whoever she wanted. 'Another thing we have in common: a unrequited crush. '

He had to do the right thing here.

After the movie ended, he asked if they could talk. They walked into theater 2, completely devoid of other people.

Rapunzel looked around, nervous. What did Hiccup want to say? Why did they have to be alone? Could it be...?

They were both nervous. That was obvious. Hiccup exhaled deeply. "Okay. I have something to tell you. "

Could it be? Really? Rapunzel nodded. "Well I have something to tell you too."

"Let me go first." Hiccup said, trying to keep eye contact with her. He felt hot and cold all over. "Promise me you won't freak

out."

Rapunzel nodded again.

"I..." Hiccup tried to keep his voice from cracking. "Have a crush on Jack."

There was no turning back now. He studied Rapunzel's face. She looked somewhat confused.

After a moment, she looked at the floor. "Oh..."

Hiccup wasn't sure what to do next. "I...uh..."

"That's wonderful! "

"Huh?" Suddenly she was smiling and holding his hands.

That was great! Sure, the person she liked didn't like her, but at least he liked someone. At least he knew how it felt.

"Rapunzel..."

"Hm?"

"You're crying. "

"Oh..." She released his hands. Hot tears dripped down her face. She wiped them away with the back of her hand.

"I'm sorry. " Hiccup said.

She froze for a moment. He knew.

"It's okay. " Rapunzel said, rubbing her eyes. "I just...need a minute."

Eventually they left the theater, once Rapunzel stopped crying and Hiccup could feel his legs. They walked in silence, exiting the theater.

"I think I'll go home now. " Rapunzel said.

"Okay." Hiccup replied.

Rapunzel turned to leave, but then stopped. "Hiccup. ..."

"Yes?"

She turned to face him. "You have to let him know. "

Well...that happened.

I get the feeling the four eat too much. This fanfic is full of food pr0n.

And so, thanks to the snow. Here is a full chapter. Forgive the changing quote marks

Chapter: Valentine's with Rapunzel

Hiccup curled up tighter in bed. It was a strangely warm morning in February. He had no desire to leave his bed. But soon Toothless would be pouncing on him, and his father would be looking for his morning coffee. He rose slowly. There had been no odd dreams that night. Just the usual Vikings and Dragons.

Hiccup took a hot shower, hoping to shake off his sleepiness. He brushed his teeth, dressed and went downstairs. Toothless bit his leg.

"Ow! Okay, okay you're hungry. I got it. "

It was around seven. There was still time to make breakfast.

Stoick strode into the room.

"Mornin'."

"Good Morning Dad."

Soon they were eating in silence.

"I suppose yer wondering why I haven't been home as much." Stoick suddenly said.

"Uh...yeah."

"Well, I have good news. Remember that restaurant that burned down two months ago?"

"The one near the park? Yeah. "

"Well the building has finally been restored, and I'm turning it into a gym." Stoick said, beaming.

"Oh, that's great, Dad."

"But wait! You haven't heard the best part yet."

"Oh...kay."

"You are going to work in it!"

"I-I whaaaaa?"

"It's going open up this summer if everything goes as planned."
"

Hiccup rubbed his arm. "I get to spend my summer indoors...oh joy."

Stoick's grin became a determined stare. "Heccup, you're getting older now. It's time you started working, you know, learn some responsibility. "

' Right.' Hiccup thought to himself. 'Because I know nothing about that. '

Hiccup stood on the step outside his front door and waited patiently for his ride. Jack appeared a bit behind schedule, with a pouting Merida and a nervous Rapunzel. Rapunzel smiled when she saw him. True, their relationship was not the same since that trip to the movies two weeks ago. Hiccup had to admit that it was worth it. At first it had been awkward, but it was nice to have someone around who understood how he felt.

He took his usual seat in the front, next to a flustered, tired looking Jack. "Hey Hic." He revved up the engine. "Alright, let's see if I can get us all to school in ten minutes."

Hiccup laughed nervously. "Well, I doubt you could do that without breaking the speed limit."

Well, Jack did make it. And he ignored the speed limit.

Jack had woken up late that morning. He slept through most of his classes that day, and stared blankly for the others.

When lunch came, he was ready for a long nap. Hiccup and Rapunzel were already seated at their usual table. He grabbed a tray of almost nothing and headed towards them until a arm flung itself around his shoulder. Jack blinked twice, before realizing one of his teammates was talking to him.

Taran was talking to him, leading him back towards his old lunch table. Jack looked at the table and his occupants as if he had not sat there for two years straight. It was his ring of friends. His teammates, their girlfriends, and anyone else dubbed with the title of 'Popular'.

He looked back across the room, to where his new comrades sat.

Hiccup was watching him. Jack shrugged, and Hiccup nodded.

Hiccup sighed and then waved at Merida as she entered the room. He didn't know why he had an issue with Jack sitting somewhere else. A year ago they were not friends. Not even acquaintances. Jack was sitting where he belonged. Being with Hiccup, Merida and Rapunzel was probably a faze.

Merida tapped Hiccup on the shoulder. "It's okay Hiccup."

"Huh?"

Rapunzel nodded. "Merida's right. We'll see Jack later."

Hiccup looked at them. "Was I making a face or something? "

Rapunzel laughed and Merida shrugged.

"Not really." Merida replied. "But yer not the most subtle guy either."

Jack stared at his old friends in disbelief. Had they always been so...vapid? He really did not care what dress Brittney was wearing to the Valentine's day dance. He was not interested in Taran's new stick polish. He glanced back at his new group of friends. Rapunzel was laughing at something, and Hiccup had his arms crossed. His eyes met Hiccup's for a moment. Merida tapped Hiccup on the shoulder. Looking at Jack, she mouthed the words: Get yer own Squirrel.

"So..." Jack's friend began, patting Jack on the arm. "Which one of those chicks are you trying to score with?"

Jack glanced at his teammate. "What?"

"The blonde is nice, but I dig the redhead." Another boy said.

Brittney studied her nails. "Jack is kinda out of their league, don't ya think?"

Taran shrugged. "Jack doesn't care about stuff like that. I mean, he's dated all types."

"Hang on a minute, I don't wanna date anyone right now." Jack said. His table erupted in laughter.

"What's so funny?" Jack asked.

"Sure Jack." His teammate laughed. "The longest I've seen you without a girl is three months. You've hit your limit."

"You never know..." Brittney said, looking at her fascinating cuticles. "He may just run back to Mavis." She looked at him.

"But what's with you and that nerd, what's his face?"

"Who?" Jack asked. He had a feeling it was time to leave the table.

"The one with the dumb name right?" His other so called friend said. "I saw him drawing junk in his notebook."

"Oh, you mean Haddock right? The freak who draws those lizard things."

Jack sat back. "You aren't talking about Hiccup, are you?"

"That's the one!" The boy said. "I hope its worth it when you nail his friend."

Jack stood then. He clenched his fists. "It's one thing if you talk about me, but it's another if you talk about Hiccup." He looked down at them. "And I'm not going to listen to you say anything else."

"Hey Jack, don't be that way." Taran said. " You know we're just messing around. "

Jack grabbed his empty lunchtray. "I'll see you on the field, Taran."

"Looks like Jack is coming back this way." Rapunzel said, waving to him.

Jack took his usual spot next to Rapunzel, across from Hiccup. "Hey kids, did you miss me?"

"What happened?" Hiccup asked.

"What do you mean?" Jack replied.

"Well, you didn't look too happy walking over here." Hiccup said, looking at the table.

Jack raked a hand through his hair. "Well, the conversation at that table wasn't very stimulating."

In art class, Ms. Ana settled for something a little normal, and had them paint a bowl of fruitâ€¦if the fruit were alive.

Hiccup wasn't sure what to do with that as an assignment, so his fruit were trying to get out of the bowl. He sat amongst his usual circle of friends. Jack, still peeved b his teammates, was ignoring the looks Taran was throwing his way.

"Are any of you going to the dance?" Rapunzel asked, while sketching a dancing banana.

Jack shrugged. "Probably not."

"Nope." Hiccup said. "Not my thing."

"Yeah." Merida said, staring at the blank sketchbook. "Some guy asked me to meet him there. Can't say Ahm too excited though. Ahm only going 'cause my mum knows about it."

"Really?" Rapunzel said. "Is it someone we know?"

"Maybe." Merida said. "It's that kid with the really long skateboard and the earring. What's his name?"

"You're going to the dance with a guy and you don't even know his name?" Jack laughed. "And people say I'm bad."

Merida tapped her pencil against her head. "'Give me a minute. His name will come to me."

"Wow." Jack said, drawing a orange dressed like a ninja. "I really feel sorry for this guy. He probably likes you."

Merida shrugged. "Ah didn't tell him to."

Jack laughed again. "Wow, Red. You're such a heartbreaker." He glanced across the room and met eyes with Mavis. He stared at her, unsure what to do. He and Mavis were usually on good terms. They had known each other for what felt like whatever, and their breakup had been a mutual thing.

When class ended, Jack was headed to his next class when Mavis called him over.

"Can I talk to you for a minute, Jack?" She didn't seem to be herself.

"Sure."

"Well, it's about eh Valentine's day danceâ€|"

Hiccup glanced back down the hallway. Ten minutes was more than enough to get to his next class. There was Jack, standing to the side with Mavis. The sight of them together made him feel sick, but he scolded himself quickly. Was it really any of his business if they were talking? He continued on to his next class.

Jack was not as chipper at the end of the day. Merida, Hiccup and Rapunzel waited for him in the parking lot. The weather was a lot warmer now, causing Hiccup to leave his scarf at home. Jack met them at the car with a wave. "Hey."

Rapunzel looked around the lot as if she expected a fifth person to show up. And then she did. Gothel appeared from the edge of the lot, causing Rapunzel to teeter away from the group.

"Rapunzel darling, there you are!"

Rapunzel gave her friends a nod and walked away. "I'll see you guys tomorrow!"

Her pace quickened as she met Gothel, blocking her friends from view. "Hi, Mom."

Her friends watched her disappear from view.

Jack shook his head. "Wow. She still doesn't trust Rapunzel to come home by herself."

Merida got into the back of the car. Hiccup took his usual spot in the front. He thought Ms. Gothel was a little over-protective, but didn't say anything. Besides, if anything was wrong, Rapunzel would have told themâ€|.right?

Jack dropped Merida off first, as her home was the farthest from his own. He then proceeded to drop Hiccup off before parking and entering North's. Her went up to bedding a made himself comfortable in one of the floor model beds. It was something he had been doing since North adopted him, and most employees were used to the St. North's heir's antics.

He rolled to one side and thought about the day so far. He was pretty sure he wouldn't be talking to anyone on the team for a while, or anyone from his old circle of friends. In retrospect, he was never too interested in them anyway. And then, there was Mavisâ€|

"Do you want to go to the dance together, for old time's sake?"

He hadn't been expecting her to ask that. Then again, he had asked her to go to a dance with him a few months ago. It was their unwritten rule. If they weren't attached, they would still go out. But something felt different to Jack. Something had changed. He wasn't sure if he could with Mavis this time. A dangerous thought crossed Jack's mind. He could just make it so he couldn't go. He

shook his head at the thought. That was the old Jack—the reckless one. Instead of giving in to those...impulses, Jack decided he would try something else.

Hiccup was dozing off in the living room when the doorbell rang. He pulled Toothless off his lap and made his way to the door. 'Maybe it's that blowtorch I ordered.'

Instead of a blowtorch, Hiccup opened the door to see Jack leaning against the doorframe and pushing the doorbell repeatedly. He had a strange look on his face, as if he was expecting something.

"Can I come in?"

"Sure—"

Jack followed Hiccup back to the living room. Hiccup, suddenly aware that his father was nowhere to be seen, felt nervous. 'Here we are, just me and Jack—alone—Yay—'

"Do you want something to drink?" Hiccup was still not used to playing the part of host, despite all the human interaction he had lately.

"Nah." Jack curled up on the couch, glancing down at Toothless. "Hey little guy."

Hiccup took his spot back on the couch. The only thing separating him from Jack was Toothless, who didn't look like he wanted to get up anytime soon. From the way Jack was sitting Hiccup figured something was wrong. But at least Jack was here, with him, instead of drunk in a hotel room or freezing in the park.

"Are you alright, Jack?"

Jack looked at him, surprised. "Wow, you can read me like an open book, huh?"

Hiccup laughed nervously. "It isn't that hard to guess."

"Okay." He turned his body to face Hiccup, whom stiffened up automatically. "About the Valentine's day dance—"

Hiccup's swallowed hard. "Y-yeah?"

"Do you think I should go with Mavis?"

"No." Hiccup answered without thinking.

"No?" Jack repeated. "Why?"

"Well—..Uh—"

What could only be described as a sharp pain plunged through Hiccup's chest. He tried to keep a straight face. 'There go those shenanigans I was afraid of. Let a guy you like in and what does he do? Talk about his ex-girlfriend.'

He looked everywhere but Jack's face. "Do you still l-like her?"

"No." Jack responded. Hiccup instantly felt relieved. "Well actually, I can't say that. She was my first girlfriend, y'know? It's not like I can turn off how I feel about her."

"Oh...okay." 'Yeah, okay. Sure. Just kill me why don't you?'

"So...what's stopping you from going with her?"

>"I don't know. It just feels like something is different between us for some reason."<p>

"Rightâ€|.Would you excuse me for a moment?"

"Well-"

Hiccup quickly walked out the room and up the stairs. He returned to his room and called Rapunzel.

Meanwhile, Rapunzel was studying in her living room. The radio was playing free form jazz, creating the only sound in the house. She was alone again, with nothing but books. Not that Rapunzel didn't love her books. It was just, sometimes she wished she could have another outlet, like a TV or a computer. Mother Gothel had said that the internet was the devil's playground, and TV shows had no morals.

She sighed, just as the phone rang. Rapunzel jumped up from her rocking chair and ran across the room. Even if it was just a telemarketer, it would be nice to talk to someone.

"Hello?"

"Hi. Rapunzel?" It was Hiccup.

"Oh, Hi Hiccup!" Much better than a telemarketer, an actual friend.

"How are you?"

"Not so good. Jack is here."

>"Annnd?"<p>

"He wants to know if I think he should go to the dance with Mavis."

Rapunzel slid down to the floor. "No!"

"Yes."

"No! Tell him no!"

>"I did."<p>

"And then?"

>"He wanted a reason."
"And what did you say?"

>"I asked him if he liked her."
"And?"

"He kinda does."

>"Noooooooo! He can't!"<p>

"Uh, he kinda can."

"Where is he now?"

"Downstairs. What do I do?"

"Okay." Rapunzel began to pace back and forth. "Okay, we can fix this. Just simply tell him you like him, and you don't want him to go with her."

"Or, I could let him go to the dance with her, since I have no control over him. And never tell him I like him, until like, ten years from now, when he's married."

"HICCUP HORRENDOUS HADDOCK THE THIRD YOU GET BACK DOWN THERE AND-"

"Ow, that's my ear you're screaming in! Why are you calling me by my whole name?"

"TELL HIM THE !" She snapped, hanging up.

Hiccup headed back downstairs, deflated. 'I wasn't expecting her to yell...'

"Everything okay?" Jack asked as Hiccup sat down.

"Yeah." Hiccup said, 'No. No, I am not okay!' "So...We were talking about Mavis...and you...together."

"At the dance." Jack added. "I don't think we'll be together anytime soon."

"Okay. So, yeah. Go with her."

...

"What do you mean Jack and Mavis are going to the dance!"

"Exactly what I said, Rapunzel."

>Hiccup and Rapunzel were the first to enter the parking lot.<p>

"Can you guys do me a favor?"

Hiccup turned his head to see carrying a box of art supplies. She teetered towards them, smiling.

"Do you need help?" Rapunzel asked.

"Well, yes but not with thisâ€|" Ana replied. "You see, they need some student volunteers for the school dance. People to take tickets and watch the exitsâ€|"

"And you want us to do it." Hiccup said, sighing. He had planned on staying as far away from school as possible that night. He had never been to a school dance, and he figured he would never have to go to one.

"Pleeease?" Ana pleaded. "You two are the most trustworthy teenagers I know!"

'And the ones you figured wouldn't have plans the evening.' Hiccup added.

"We'll do it!" Rapunzel responded.

"What?" Hiccup said, looking at her.

Rapunzel pulled him to the side and whispered. "Don't you see? Then we can watch Jack at the dance. And, we can find out who Merida is going with!"

"But I don't want to fi-"

"Hey, sorry we're late." Jack said, coming down the school's front steps with Merida. "Hey, Tooth. What's going on?"

" just signed us up to work at the dance." Hiccup explained.

"Work? That doesn't sound like fun." Jack replied.

Hiccup looked at Rapunzel. "Are you sure your Mom will let you go?"

Rapunzel put her hands on her hips. "I think I can convince her."

"So, Mother, you're always talking about how I need to learn responsibility..." Rapunzel said, as she set the table for dinner.

"Yes dear." Gothel replied.

"And I can't think of a better learning experience then monitoring at the school dance. You see, my teacher said-"

"A dance?"

"Yes, the dance needs-"

"Out of the question. You're still grounded Rapunzel. "

"But I'm not going there to dance, I'll be-"

"I don't want to hear it, Rapunzel. Now, turn off the oven."

She sighed. "Yes, Mother."

As the dance approached, Rapunzel tried harder to get her mother's permission. If she didn't succeed, Hiccup would be left alone at the dance. It was because of her that he was going. He would need her support to get through the night. Two days before, in a last effort, she decided to tell her mother the truth.

One afternoon when she returned home from school, she asked again.

"I know you don't want to hear this again..." She began.

Gothel plopped onto the couch and covered her face with one hand. I truly hope you aren't about to say what I think you are. "

"You see I only wanted to go to the dance because my friend has a crush on this guy, who's going with his ex-girlfriend-"

"He?"

"Uh, my friend -"

"This is about a boy?"

"Yes! Well no, you see he needs me t-"

"He doesn't need you. No one needs you Rapunzel. I thought I made it clear that you were not old enough to date."

"I'm sixteen, mom. And this isn't about me dating, its about my friend. "

"Your friend? Ha. I doubt it. Going off to a high dance to help a friend. Rapunzel, please. Don't think I can't see what you're doing.

"But Mother-"

Gothel sat up. "ENOUGH!"

Rapunzel flinched.

"I should have seen this coming. Letting you go to school...making friends with those disgusting children. "

"My friends are NOT disgusting!" Rapunzel said, raising her voice.

Gothel's eyes narrowed. "Who do you think you're talking to young lady?" She stood over Rapunzel, wearing a menacing glare.

Rapunzel kept her eyes on the floor. "I-I-I..." She trembled, afraid of what could happen next.

"It seems to me that you need to go clear your head..."

Rapunzel swallowed hard. "P-Please mother. I won't-"

"In the attic." Gothel said, grabbing Rapunzel's arm.

"Wait!" Rapunzel cried, "It's okay. I promise I won't talk back to you again! "

"It's too late." Gothel said, in a sing-song voice. She dragged Rapunzel from her rocking chair to the floor.

"I sorry!" Rapunzel cried. "I'm sorry!"

Hiccup glanced at the clock. Only two hours until the dance. He looked at his closet door. Hanging there were the shirt and dresspants Lumiere and Jack picked out. He wasn't sure why Jack insisted on dressing him for certain occasions, but he figured Jack knew what he was doing. In a odd form of protest, he decided to wear sneakers with the outfit.

He hadn't heard from Rapunzel for two days. Jack had explained that when he picked her up in the morning it was usually on the curb, so he didn't actually know where she lived. No one answered when Hiccup

called. But, according to Ms. Ana, had called to say she was sick.

For one reason or another, both Jack and Merida were bothered by this. As far as Hiccup could recall, nothing was wrong with Rapunzel. Still, he hoped she would be available for a phone call later. He showered and dressed before receiving a odd birds and bees type speech from his father, and left for the dance. The air was warmer than it had been in January. It was somewhat like spring in Berk: not too cold, but nowhere near hot.

He hummed softly to himself as he walked down the empty streets of Burgess. He wasn't sure why he was listening to Rapunzel. He could have just ignored her and stayed at home. There, in his room, he could work on his dragons and his village. The more he thought about it, the more it sounded like a good idea...

Soon he was standing outside Burgess high school. The dance had yet to start, but light pop music could be heard wafting from inside. Teenagers were lined up outside the school, mostly dressed in shades of red. He saw waving at him at the front door.

"Evening Hiccup! Come inside!"

He followed her to the gymnasium's entrance. There were metal folding chairs stationed at the door, flanked by a long red streamer taped to the door.

"All you have to do is ask for tickets. If a student wants to leave early, he can't come back in. We stop letting kids in at eight thirty." explained.

"Alright." Hiccup said, sitting in a chair.

"Have you seen Rapunzel?" Tooth asked.

"Nope." Hiccup replied. "Hopefully she'll show up soon."

Thirty minutes into the affair, Hiccup was wondering where Rapunzel was.

"Hey Hiccup! "

Hiccup looked up. Standing above him was Jack, walking arm and arm with. Mavis wore a dark red dress that matched Jack's tie.

"Hi Jack, hey Mavis." 'Kill me.' "Did you guys see Rapunzel? "

"No." Jack said, handing him the tickets. "Shouldn't she be here with you?"

Hiccup glanced at the door. "She's supposed to be. " He shrugged. "Well, have fun."

"Alright. Hopefully she'll show up. See you later. "

Another twenty minutes passed before Merida appeared. She was dressed in a long emerald gown, sticking out from all her red peers. Coming after her was a tall boy with tan skin, brown hair and blue eyes.

"Hey, Heccup."

"Hi Merida, err..."

"Jim." The boy said. "Jim Hawkins."

Hiccup looked at him. He was certain he had seen the boy before, probably on a skateboard behind the school. He had a gold earring in one ear, and a small ponytail. He was dressed in a red flannel shirt and black pants. Neither he nor Merida looked too happy.

"Where's Punzie?" Merida asked.

"Punzie?" Hiccup repeated. 'And you talk about Jack's nicknames...'
"Oh, Rapunzel. Well, I haven't seen her."

Merida glanced across the dance floor.

Jack and Mavis were standing in a corner, laughing.

"Are you okay by yerself?" Merida asked.

"Yeah." Hiccup replied. "I'm good. Enjoy the dance."

Merida shrugged. "I'll be back. "

"Nice talking with you." Jim said, before walking watched them go. It was almost eight thirty.

He folded his arms and leaned back.

He heard a familiar chuckle. There was Jack, whispering something in Mavis's ear. She laughed again, hitting his arm. They looked so perfect together. With their warm smiles and matching outfits. Even if they weren't together, they still looked like they should be.

It was something that made Hiccup feel like melting into the floor.

Was this how Rapunzel had felt before? Had he made her feel this bad? He wasn't sure. Rapunzel seemed so happy now, as if it had never happened. But was she really happy? Did it hurt her to be around him? Was she pretending, like he did with Jack?

Hiccup looked upward. A slow song began to play, and Jack was pulling Mavis out to the dance floor.

Hiccup watched them for a moment before closing his eyes. He was tired of looking, and yet he opened his eyes again. Mavis had her face buried in Jack's neck, as he pressed his lips against her hair. Jack had his arms wrapped around her, in a way that transcended 'just being friends'.

Hiccup's chest felt tight. He couldn't be with Jack like that. He would never be with Jack like that. Tears began to form in his eyes, and he left the gym without a second thought.

He passed Eilonwy and Taran on his way out.

"Hiccup. " Eilonwy called. "Where are you going?"

Hiccup didn't reply. His throat felt dry and the tears kept coming. He was sure he looked like a loser, running out crying. But, he didn't care. For now he was leaving. He would go far, far away from Burgess high school and back to his tiny village, plagued with dragons.

What Hiccup did not see was the way Mavis flinched when a familiar face appeared.

"Mavis?"

Jack pulled away from her. There was a tall, red headed young man standing in front of them. Jack wagered he was around nineteen, and clearly not a Burgess high student. Jack looked towards the door. Hiccup was gone, and Rapunzel had never showed up.

"Jonny!" Mavis said, pushing Jack further away. "What are you doing here?"

"I figured I'd come back into town." The young man said. "You know, for Valentine's day. "

"Oh..." Mavis looked at Jack. "Uh..."

"And you are?" Jack said, shoving his hands into his pockets.

"Jonathan." He said. "Mavy's boyfriend."

Jack raised an eyebrow. "Really?" He said, looking at Mavis. "Is that so, Mavy?"

Mavis looked at him. "Jack..."

Jack shook his head. "If you'll excuse me." He was several seconds away from making a scene, and figured talking to Hiccup would do him some good.

Taran and Eilonwy walked in then.

"Jack!" Eilonwy said, bursting with excitement. "What happened to Hiccup? He was all weepy and teary."

Taran shushed her. "Really, Eilonwy. Don't start."

"Hiccup was crying? " Jack asked.

"Yes." Eilonwy replied. "He left just now."

Hiccup hurried home, ignoring his father's questions as locked himself in his room. He buried himself under the covers, crying softly. When he was tired of feeling sorry for himself, he sat at his desk and sketched. His Nightfury concept was looking pretty good now. Maybe it was time to try a different medium.

Sometime later Jack found Merida and Jim by the buffet table, stuffing their faces with tiny chocolates.

"Hic left here crying. " Jack told her. "Did you see what happened?"

Merida almost choked on a bonbon. "What!? What did you do?!" She said, suddenly angry with him.

"Do?" Jack repeated, dumbfounded. "I've been with Mavis this whole time!"

"Ach!" Merida groaned. "Of course y'were. Well, what are you standing here for? Go find him!"

Jack left the dance after that. He had left his car at home, and ran back home to home get it. Soon he was driving to Hiccup's, confused. What could have possibly made Hiccup so upset? Hiccup was never upset about anything. He was a walking talking ball of indifference.

Jack rang Hiccup's doorbell and a disgruntled Stoick answered the door. He peered down at Jack with a sense of indifference. "What?"

Jack swallowed hard. "Uh, Is Hiccup here?"

"In his room, but-"

"Good." Jack darted past Stoick and up the stairs.

Stoick stared at Jack before shaking his head. He was sure they were friends, so there was nothing to worry about, right?

Hiccup's door was open when Jack entered his room. Hiccup had unlocked it for better ventilation. Jack stepped into the room, a little uneasy. But as soon as he entered the space, he was struck with awe.

Dragons. The entire room was filled with Dragons. Paintings, sketches, and models. Here and there was the occasional nature painting, or some sort of wrestling memorabilia. Jack walked through the room slowly. At first he didn't even notice Hiccup, who sat slumped at his desk, asleep. On his desk was the viking village, complete with all its tiny inhabitants. Jack carefully picked up a villager. A lot of work had gone into the girl, from her wild blonde hair, to her fur boots. 'Camicazi' was etched in tiny black letters on the bottom of her boot.

Hiccup suddenly stirred, causing Jack to place the girl back on the desk. Hiccup rubbed his eyes and stretched. He sat with his heads in his hands for a moment.

Jack took two steps back. "Uh...Hi?"

Hiccup flinched and turned around. "Jack?" He jumped up. "Wh-what are you doing here? "

Jack scratched his head. "Well, this girl saw you crying at the dance and..."

Hiccup crossed his arms. " It was Eilonwy, wasn't it?"

Jack nodded. "Yeah...Are you okay? "

Hiccup sighed. "I'm alright. Just...tired. What happened with Mavis?"

Jack rolled his eyes. "Her new boyfriend showed up."

Hiccup sat back down. "What? "

Jack crossed his arms. "You would think she would mention having one of those. " His eyes fell o n Hiccup's latest work, a painted Nightfury, illuminating darkness with purple flames. "Did you make all of these?"

Hiccup rubbed his arm. "Well yeah." He said, blushing. No one had ever seen his room before.

"It's incredible..." Jack said. He pointed to a sketched mounted on the wall. "What's this one?"

"A stormfly dragon."

"And that one?"

"That's a Thunderdrum."

"Who's this?"

"One of the romans."

The more Jack asked, the more Hiccup offered. The minutes ticked by as Jack unraveled Hiccup and his dragon filled world. Soon he found that there was a whole story behind Hiccup's obsession based on stories from his ancestors. The island of Berk owed its existence to Vikings and mythical beasts. Hiccup more than happy to share his stories with Jack, and surprised that he even wanted to listen. He had been afraid of what would happen if any of his friends stepped into his room. It was a side of himself that preferred not to share.

Soon it was almost ten, and time for Jack to leave. They said their goodbyes at the front door. Jack drove home elated. At first he had been worried about Hiccup , but he chided himself for that. Hiccup was a lot stronger than he looked. He wasn't the type to cry in a corner, and even if he did, it wouldn't be for long. He wasn't some mopey teenager, he was Hiccup: the artistic sarcastic king of the viking squirrels.

I do not recall all the references made in this chapter but...

Eilonwy and Taran: From the black cauldron movie and book series (go read it, it is so good I swear)

Jonny: Jonathan from Hotel Transylvania

Lumiere: Candlestick in Beauty and the Beast

Jim Hawkins: Main character from Disney movie Treasure Planet

Camicazi:character from the How to train your dragon book series,
possible inspiration for Astrid

15. Chapter 15

Mild curiosity here. What do you think of Jim and Merida? (AKA the disney teens who can do stuff, without a love interest to help, save, protect or motivate them)

Chapter: Release with Rapunzel

Rapunzel wrapped her arms around herself. It was cold that February morning, as she sat on the dusty floor. Three days had gone gone by. The morning sun shone in from the crack between two wooden boards. She closed her eyes and tried to imagine a warm sunny place.

The last time she was up here, Rapunzel was in the eighth grade. She could remember it as clear as day. One of the girls in her class was having a slumber party. Rapunzel didn't know her well, but the girl invited her. Rapunzel begged Gothel for days to go, until the woman snapped, dragged her up the stairs and locked her in the attic.

Rapunzel had spent six days up there, living off water and bread. Every time Gothel gave her a bathroom break she relished in the sight of color, the feeling of carpet and tile beneath her feet. Anything was better than the cold wooden attic floor.

This time was no different. It was still cold, still dusty, and all her fault.

Hiccup woke up that morning earlier than usual. He took Toothless out for a walk, with his earphones jammed in his ears.

Jack liked his dragons. He said they were cool. He didn't laugh at him or mock him. He asked questions. He listened. Okay, so he wasn't in love with Hiccup, but at least he liked him.

Hiccup tried to ignore the butterflies in his stomach. He hummed softly to himself, trying to keep his feelings contained. He wanted to talk to someone about it. Rapunzel was the obvious choice. He looked at the bright sky before him. The sun was still rising. Despite her bright and sunny attitude, he doubted Rapunzel was up yet.

"Hiccup! "

He turned. Lilo, Stitch, and Nani were across the street, waving.

He took his earphones out. "Good Morning!"

"Good Morning !" Lilo called back. "Out for a walk?"

"Yeah. You?"

"Yup! Let's walk together!"

Stitch and Toothless trotted ahead. They continued their walk for another fifteen minutes, before Stitch declared it was time for

breakfast. It was then that they said their goodbyes.

Hiccup returned home just as Stoick set out for his morning jog. He entered the kitchen and started cooking. His father would be back soon enough. He made breakfast for Toothless first. By the time he was cooking his own meal, Stoick father returned from his walk.

They ate in silence. The only sounds were the occasional grunt and the television in the living room. Hiccup got up to get orange juice, just as the second news cast began.

" This is WD news coming to you live from Burgess tower..." The prompt droned on as Hiccup retrieved his beverage. He glanced at the screen as he returned to the table.

"...WD news asks...Have you seen these children?"

The faces of several toddlers were shown on screen.

"Wow. " Hiccup said. "Some of them are my age now." He took another sip.

The last child shown was a blonde girl with large green eyes. The name Rapunzel Corona was stamped under the image. Her current age:17.

Hiccup spit out his orange juice.

"No way..."

Hiccup tried to behave as normal as possible. He need to think. He needed information.

He searched the internet to find as much as he could and compared his findings to what he knew about Rapunzel. After that, he called the first person who came to mind: Jack.

"Hello...?"

"Meet me at my house in a hour. It's important."

"Wha?"

"Just do it ,Jack."

He tried to contact Merida, who was watching the triplets until her mother returned from shopping. He figured he would fill her in later.

Jack arrived an hour and thirty minutes later, due to the fact he thought their conversation had been a dream. He was met at the door by a serious looking Hiccup, with hair still damp from a shower. The smell of honeysuckle wafted, giving Jack a weird feeling. He was somehow more aware of everything: the freckles trickling down to Hiccup's neck and disappearing beneath his shirt, the thin fabric of his sweats, which could probably come off with one sharp tug...

Jack shook the confusing thoughts from his head. "You called?"

"

"Yeah. We need to talk."

Jack followed Hiccup back to the living room. There, Toothless was waiting in front of Hiccup's laptop. Hiccup nudged the cat over. "There's some stuff you need to see."

Jack sat next to him. "What's this about?"

"I think Rapunzel might have been kidnapped. "

"WHAT?!"

"Well, fifteen years ago." He brought up a webpage. "Take a look at this. This girl, Rapunzel Corona was kidnapped from her house fifteen years ago."

Jack looked at the child. "Okay, she looks like her, but this kid lived in Florida."

"Exactly. " Hiccup said. "Now look at this. It's a imaging software that shows what, she would look like now."

"Damn. It's Goldie. "

"And, according to this a Narcissa Gothel lived four blocks away from the Corona house, seventeen years ago."

"Okay, so you're saying she kidnapped her. How come no one else noticed this stuff? "

"Like you said, she lived five states away. Rapunzel's face wasn't shown on tv here until after the first year of her disappearance. She was actually one of several children who went missing during a huge storm that summer. The other kids have been found dead or alive since then."

"So what do we do? Call the cops? "

Hiccup shook his head. "I don't think that is a good idea. Gothel has had her for this long, and we don't know why she took Rapunzel in the first place. We need to figure out where they live, and check on Rapunzel. "

"And then what?"

"Separate them. If we can get Rapunzel back out, we can involve the authorities without putting her in danger. "

"Are you sure about that?"

"Kidnappers get more dangerous when they're cornered. She's had Rapunzel all this time, so she wouldn't suspect anything if it was one of us at her door."

"So what's the plan?"

" I'm working on it. But I think I've got two ideas, though. But we're going to need something. Well, four somethings."

Merida stared at the laptop in disbelief.

"So Punzie was kidnapped as a child, and you want to go break into her house to confront her mom?"

"Basically. " Hiccup said, glancing across Merida's livingroom. Her brothers were attempting to drag Jack out of the room.

"So what's the plan?"

"Well, we need a few things. Your brothers, my neighbor and her dog, and a teacher."

"Tooth is out best bet." Jack said, tugging Hubert off his leg. "But what for?"

"We need an authority figure with a legitimate reason for visiting. She may not answer the door for us. She's our backup plan, in case doesn't answer the door. Now, here's the plan..."

Hiccup approached the Pelekai house slowly. Before he could reach the door, a horrified woman ran out, screaming.

"Waaaaait!" Lilo called after her. "He didn't mean to scare you! And you left your purse!"

Hiccup watched the woman run away. "Did Stitch scare off another babysitter?"

"Yeah." Lilo nodded. "Nani was gonna ask you but your Dad said you were out."

Hiccup crossed his arms. "Well, I was wondering if you wanted to help me with something."

"What kind of something? "

"Is Stitch a good tracker?"

"He's got a nose like a gythoropean. Or a blood hound."

"Good. What time is Nani coming back? "

"Eh..Six. Why?"

Jack walked up the driveway and bent down to her level. "Our friend is being held captive by a evil witch. She's going to use her in a ritual to stay young forever! "

Lilo gasped. "No!"

Jack nodded. "It's totally true. I'm Jack."

"I'm Lilo."

Hiccup shook his head. "Now let's get to work. "

Jack, Hiccup, Merida, Harris, Hubert, Hamish, Lilo and Stitch drove up to Burgess High.

As soon the car stopped they all scrambled out.

Waiting at the front door was Jim, looking surprised to see so many people.

"Wow, Jack. Is that a clown car?"

"Ha ha." Jack responded. "Can you break in or not?"

Jim laughed. "Oh, I can get in alright."

They entered the school and headed straight for the office.

"I'm surprised that you're going through this for Rapunzel. " Jack said.

"Rapunzel is my friend. " Hiccup replied. "So if I can help, I will. If something happened to you or Merida, I would do the same thing."

"I believe you." Jack said. "You've saved me twice already."
"

"Huh?"

Jim sat down in front of a secretary's desk. "Alright. Let's have a look at Rapunzel Gothel's file."

Merida watched. "So y'weren't lying when you said y'chaged yer permanent record."

"I wouldn't lie to you Merida. " Jim responded. "Okay, according to her record, this is her current address. I'm curious though. Why do you guys need it so bad?"

"It's better if you don't know." Hiccup said. "That way you don't have to lie later if you're questioned."

"Okay. " Jim said. "But if you get away with whatever it is, you have to tell me everything. "

Jack nodded. "It's a deal."

Merida rang the doorbell. She swallowed hard, waiting for a reply. Gothel's house looked like any other suburban home, complete with a small garden and manicured lawn. More than anything, she wanted Hiccup to be wrong. She wanted the information he had shown her to be a coincidence. So what if Gothel had lived in close proximity to the Corona house. So what if Rapunzel was identical to the rendering of sixteen year old Rapunzel Corona. And yet, they hadn't seen or heard from Rapunzel in days... Finally, the door opened.

Gothel peered out of her door. Standing there was the red headed girl. "Can I help you? "

Merida tried not fidget. "Hello there, Mam. Ah c-came to see how Rapunzel is."

Gothel's eyes narrowed. "She isn't fit for company right now. " She began to close the door. "I'll tell her you dropped by-"

"Ah understand..."Merida grabbed the doorknob. " Wait! Could Ah use yer phone, Ms. Gothel? Mine is dead."

Gothel narrowed her eyes. "Wait. How did you know where we live?"

"Um..."

Gothel waited.

Merida pulled hard on the door, yanking it open.
"Attack!"

"What-"

Her brothers lunged at Gothel , pushing her to the floor. Merida ran inside, followed by Hiccup, Lilo, and Stitch.

"What the heck, Merida! " Hiccup said. "That wasn't the plan!"

"Shut up and search!" Merida called back.

Jack sat in his car, arms folded. At Hiccup's request, he was staying in the car.

Stitch sniffed around before running towards the kitchen. Lilo and Hiccup followed him.

Gothel struggled to stand. She grabbed hold of Hamish's hair and threw the boy across the room.

"Hamish!" Merida yelled, running towards her brother.

Harris let go of Gothel just as she began kicking him.

Stitch made a sudden U-turn and headed back out the kitchen, and towards the stairs. Before Hiccup and Lilo could follow, Gothel entered the kitchen and grabbed a large iron skillet and closed the door behind her.

Hiccup could hear Merida shouting through the door. He held his arms up in defense, shielding Lilo. "Now, Ms. Gothel-"

She swung hard, hitting him in the face. Lilo screamed as Hiccup fell to the floor. Gothel raised her pan again, hitting his back this time.

Merida cradled her brother in her arms. He wasn't bleeding, but the pain was enough to make him cry. Harris wasn't doing too well either, and Hubert looked like he was in shock . She heard Lilo's scream and stared at the door in horror. "Hiccup!"

Before she could move, someone ran past her.

Jack entered the kitchen and grabbed Gothel from behind. "Hold it! What hell is going on here?"

"Oh,Great." Gothel said. "Now I'm the bad guy."

Lilo ran to Hiccup, who has still on the floor. Pain exploded in his

head, and Hiccup sucked a large breath in between his teeth. He could hear Jack and Lilo talking, but he was more concerned with the ringing in his ears and the burning sensation spreading across his back.

Rapunzel sat frozen in the corner. There had been screams and thumps. Had someone broken in? Was it ruffians? Thugs? her mother okay? Rapunzel was unsure of what to do. There was a scratching noise from outside the door. She looked around for a weapon, and found nothing suitable. A low growl followed the scratching, and footsteps.

"Is she in there?" She knew that voice. It was Jack. "Rapunzel!" He yelled. "Are you there?"

"Jack?" She ran to the door, banging on it. "Stand back Rapunzel."

She took several steps back.

With Stitch's help, Jack managed to open the door.

Jack ran in. "Rapunzel! Are you okay? "

"Jack? What happened? I heard screaming."

Jack looked around the attic. It was dusty and cold, and looked like it had not been clean in ages. "Did she lock you in here?"

"Yes." Rapunzel sighed. "But, I guess I deserved it and-"

"No."

"Huh?"

"That isn't normal, Rapunzel. "

"Nani gets mad at me sometimes." Lilo said. "But she would never lock me in a room. Though I've locked her out before..."

"She was upset. " Rapunzel said. "That's what happens when you misbehave. I mean just because-"

"Stop." Jack said. "Don't make excuses for her. Let me guess: when you do something bad, you get punished, right?"

"Parents punish their kids all the time." Rapunzel said.

"No." Jack shook his head. "You only think its normal because its how you grew up. Trust me, I know. My parents were the same way."

"But is-"

"North is a great parent. My real parents were total jerks. Your Mom however..."

"Where is she? Was that her screaming?"

Jack sighed and shook his head. "She kidnapped you. She locked you in a attic. Real Moms don't do that, whether they're related to you, or

not."

"B-Butâ€|"

"Come with me."

Armed with the skillet Merida stood over Gothel, whom Jack had tied to the rocking chair with a gardening hose. "We know what you did to Rapunzel."

Hiccup sat on the couch, with a bag of ice on his head. Jack had gone upstairs with Lilo to see what Stitch had found.

"Listen, Miss Gothel." Hiccup said, slowly trying to focus. "I looked up the facts. We know Rapunzel isn't your daughter."

"It's called adoption." Gothel said. "I guess you've never heard of it before."

"Oh really?" Hiccup said, still capable of snark. "Because our friend Jack was also adopted, and showed us a online database that follows adoptions taking place since 1985. And none of the Rapunzels between here and Florida are your daughter."

"Is that true, Mother?" Rapunzel asked, as she, Jack, Lilo and Stitch entered the room.

Gothel turned her head. "Rapunzel! Quick, call the police! These ruffians-"

"Is it true!?" Rapunzel repeated, much louder this time.

Hiccup winced. Her tone was doing nothing for his headache. "Rapunzel. Are you okay?"

"Hiccup!" Rapunzel gasped. "What happened to you?"

Merida gestured to Gothel with the skillet. "Yer Mum hit him with this."

"What? Why?"

Gothel decided to resort to plan b. "Rapunzel, listen to me! These ruffians broke in and took me hostage. Call the police!"

Jack crossed his arms. "Yeah, Goldie. Call the police and tell them that your mother locked you in the attic. I'm sure they'll have plenty to say."

"Did you really break in?" Rapunzel asked.

"Yeah." Hiccup nodded and winced in pain. "In hindsight it wasn't the best thing to do. I mean, it wasn't part of the plan but-"
>Merida sighed. "We got in, didn't we?"
"Yes, and can press charges." Hiccup replied.

"I think we're getting off topic here." Lilo said.

Jack nodded. "The squirt is right. Why did you kidnap Rapunzel?"

"I don't owe you any explanations." Gothel said.

"Us, no." Hiccup replied. "Rapunzel? Yes."

All eyes landed on Rapunzel, who wasn't sure what to think. Her friends had broken into her house, for her. Her mother was not her mother, and her real family was off somewhere else. Did she have a Mom and Dad? Were there siblings? Where did she come from?

"This is too much." Rapunzel said, crumbling down to the floor. "I don't know what to think."

"I'll tell you what to think." With Merida momentarily distracted, Gothel delivered a kick to Merida's shin.

"Och!" Merida dropped the skillet, which Gothel caught and used to swing her way across the grabbed hold of Rapunzel's arm and made a run for the front door.

"Ahh!" Rapunzel screamed. Stitch and Jack followed after her. Before Gothel could make it to the door, another familiar face entered. It was Jim.

"Woah." He took one look at Gothel and Rapunzel and knew something was wrong. He blocked the doorway, allowing Stitch to latch on to Gothel and Rapunzel to break free from her captor. She ran back to the safety of her friends. Gothel bashed Stitch repeated with the pan, falling down the steps and onto the lawn. With much effort, she ripped Stitch apart from her and got to her feet, stumbling before running away.

Jack started to run after her.

"Let her go, Jack!" Hiccup yelled.

Jack stopped and walked back towards the house. Jim and Hiccup stood in the doorway, while Stitch rolled across the lawn.

Jim watched him. "Uh...is this a dog?"

"Don't think about it." Hiccup said, rubbing his head.

Jim shrugged and walked inside.

Jack placed a hand on Hiccup's forehead. "I think we should take you to a hospital."

Hiccup shrugged. "Well, I-"

He was caught off guard by a sudden embrace from Jack. With his head buried in Jack's sweatshirt, Hiccup was enveloped in the scents of pine and peppermint.

>"Don't ever scare me like that again." Jack said, his chin resting on Hiccup's head. Hiccup did reply, and Jack pulled away from him. "The next time you decide to break into some crazy lady's house, you do not make me the getaway guy, got it?"<p>

"Yeah..." Hiccup replied. "I promise. "

References and quotes from Tangled were in here. Just look for

them.

16. Chapter 16

All you people reading this are totally rad. Seriously. It hurts me to look at the typos. I'm in the process of replacing chapters. (revised 1-3 so far)

Cameos.

Chapter: Spring with Rapunzel.

"I'm nervous." Rapunzel said, looking out the car window.

Hiccup glanced back at her from the passenger seat. "Don't worry. You'll be fine. "

Merida looked from Rapunzel to Jack, who had his eyes fixed on the road. It was a warm Saturday morning in March. They were driving to the next town over to meet the Arendelles, Rapunzel's cousins. With the help of the police, they had located Rapunzel's relatives. Like Gothel, the Coronas had moved from Florida after the storm. Unbeknownst to Rapunzel, they were waiting for her at the Arendelle house.

Jack looked forward. He knew who Rapunzel would be reunited with her parents today, but it gave him a weird feeling. He hated his real parents. There had been times during his childhood that he had nightmares about them. The only thing that stopped him from wishing they never met was Sophie. 'Sisters. Not allowed to live with them, can't live without them.'

Not too far from him was someone feeling similar thoughts. Elsa paced around her room, going over the day's events. Any moment now her long lost cousin would be showing up. Elsa had tried her best to produce a little party to welcome Rapunzel into the family. However, her sister Anna had other plans.

Elsa had tried repeatedly to explain their family's position. Her Father and mother had been Mayor and City council representative, respectively. After they had died, it fell on Elsa to run the house. She was expected to go into politics, just like the last four generations of the Arendelle family. She also had her aunt and uncle to look after, along with Anna. It took a lot of time and effort to keep her family's personal business out of the local papers. And Anna wanting to get a elephant did not help. If it weren't for Kai and Gerda, Elsa didn't know what she would do. 'Sisters. Can't understand them, can't live without them.'

The Arendelle house was large and surrounded by tall pines trees. The nearest neighbor was a thirty minute walk away. Anna hated the silence. It was so quiet she thought she could everyone think. Everyone of course, meant Kai, Gerda, Uncle Thomas and Aunt Primrose, and Elsa. They almost never had company over. If it were not for school, Anna was sure she would have no friends.

She continued to hang streamers in the main hall. Elsa told her not to get carried away, but she couldn't help it. Uncle Thomas and Aunt Primrose had told her a lot about what Rapunzel had been like as a

child. She had always hoped for their sake that Rapunzel was still out there somewhere. They kept pictures of her in their room which made Anna wonder what she looked like now. Was she tall? Skinny? Was she still blonde, or did her hair turn a darker color with age? As she daydreamed she lost her balance on the ladder. "Ah!" The ladder shook before it suddenly steadied. She looked down to see a tall, disgruntled young man holding the ladder. "Be careful. " He said, before walking away.

"Thank you Kristopher!" She called.

"It's Kristoff!" He called back, not turning around.

Kristoff was a hired hand for the party who lived nearby. He was always looking for work to pay for college, so Elsa obliged by giving him the occasional odd job. Anna thought he was a little grumpy, but she figured anyone who lived even farther in the woods and only came out to work would be.

Kai suddenly came into the hallway. "Miss Anna, a car is coming down the driveway. "

Elsa entered then. "I saw from the window. Are you ready, Anna?"

Anna slipped and almost fell down the ladder. "Y-Yes!" She came down slowly.

Kai grabbed the ladder. "I'll put this away."

"Aren't you excited? " Anna asked Elsa as they walked to the door. "For the first time in forever, we're meeting a new family member! I could almost sing about it!"

"Yes." Elsa nodded. "Tell Gerda to open up the gates."

Jack drove up the sloping driveway. Rapunzel began to fidget in the back seat. "What if they don't like me? What if they think my hair is weird? What if they tell me to cut it?"

"There's nothing wrong with your hair, Punzie." Merida said. "Looks like they live pretty far from town, though."

"And almost three hours from us." Hiccup said, looking out the window.

"That's so far away." Rapunzel sighed. "How am I going to go to school? "

"You'll probably have to transfer." Hiccup replied.

"But, I don't want to leave Burgess! Maybe this was a bad idea."

The car stopped in front of a large iron gate. A short plump woman opened it, and Jack drove up to the house.

"Well, here we are." He said, as he parked.

"I'm not ready." Rapunzel said.

"Rapunzel. " Hiccup said, turning to her. "They want to meet you. At least give them a chance."

The doorbell rang. Elsa opened the door, just as Anna threw confetti and yelled "Welcome home!"

The one she showered with the glittering paper was not Rapunzel, but Merida.

"See?" Merida said, turning to Rapunzel. "This could be you right now."

"Rapunzel? " Anna asked.

Merida shook her head as Jack pushed Rapunzel forward.

"Hi." Rapunzel said. "It's me-Uh, me Rapunzel. "

Elsa welcomed her with a smile. "It's nice to meet you, Rapunzel. I'm your cousin, Elsa. And this is-"

"Anna, your other cousin." Anna said, stepping forward. "It's great to finally meet you!" She took Rapunzel off guard with a sudden hug.

"Please come in. " Elsa said, stepping aside. Rapunzel entered and her friends followed suit.

"Nice place you've got here." Jack said, stepping in. He looked at Elsa for a moment. 'White hair...well, she has good taste.' "I'm Jack."

Elsa shook his hand. "Nice to meet you."

Kai appeared in the hall again. "Shall I show your guests to the sitting room? "

"Please do." Elsa said, nodding.

Rapunzel's party followed Kai as Anna and Elsa trailed behind.

"Hey Elsa." Anna whispered.

"Hm?"

"That guy Jack has white hair."

" I noticed. "

"He's kinda cute..."

Elsa nodded. "I suppose so. "

"Come on." She said, grabbing Elsa's hand.

"Anna wait-"

Anna sprinted ahead, dragging Elsa along.

Kai opened the door to the sitting room and Rapunzel walked in.

It was beautiful room with large plush couches, a large fire place and more decorations. But what caught Rapunzel's eye was the couple standing in the middle of it all.

"Rapunzel? " Her mother asked, unsure.

"Uh huh." Rapunzel nodded. She ran into her mother's arms, and was in turn enveloped in Thomas's.

For the first time in forever, more characters showed up...

Elsa:Frozen

Anna: Frozen

Kristoff:Frozen

Kai:Frozen/The Snow Queen

Gerda:Frozen/The Snow Queen

King Thomas:Tangled

Queen Primrose:Tangled

What's that? The chapter was short?

Hm...

I guess you don't want another chapter by the end of the week.

See you in a few days.

17. Chapter 17

That moment when you almost miss class because you went to pick up your textbook for class.

Chapter: Friends, with Hiccup

I'm tired. That is the easiest way to describe myself right now. Things could be worse I suppose...

It's a little after seven. I already made breakfast, and Dad is reading the paper.

"How is your friend Rapunzel doing?" He asked. Dad had been a little upset with us after he found out what happened at Rapunzel's house. Jack had told him the whole thing was my idea and insisted that it was a great idea. In the end, Dad had said he was proud. I think that was the first time he ever said he was proud of me. I really hope it's not the last!

"Rapunzel is fine. She's adjusting." After everything, Rapunzel has been living with the DunBrochs. She's going off to her real family right after this school year is over. We're going to miss her, but I'm sure her family has been missing her for some time now. It's not

like she's going away forever. I looked down at my breakfast, and tried to focus on eating.

By the time I finished eating, I could hear loud music coming from outside.

"EVERYBODY WILL BE DANCING AND BE DOING IT RIGHT, EVERYBODY WILL-"

Ah, yes. There's Jack, sharing his wonderful taste in music with my neighbors. If it wasn't Daft Punk I would be a little angrierâ€¦

I grabbed my backpack, said my goodbyes and headed out. Jack was pulled up outside as usual, with Merida and Rapunzel sitting in back. I wonder what mornings with the DunBrochs are like. And at the same time, I hope I never know. "Morning Hic." Jack said, smiling at me.

That smile should be a registered weapon. I nodded at him. "Good morning."

I took my usual spot in the front and glanced back at Rapunzel and Merida. "Good morning." I looked back at Jack. "I think you've aggravated my neighbors enough for now."

Jack turned the volume down with a frown. "Hic, they'll never know what good music is unless I share it with them."

"Don't worry Jack." I said. "They have radios. They'll discover it one day, I promise."

We drove off, having the usual conversations. It all went by in a blur actually, the next thing I knew, Jack had pulled up in front of the school. Suddenly Jack's cold hand was pressed against my forehead. "Are you okay Hiccup?" I looked at him, trying to gather my thoughts. His hand was so cold. It was nice. He was nice. Everything was nice-

"Heccup?" Merida said, bringing me back to reality.

"You're kinda hot." Jack said. I'm pretty sure I turned red at that point. I know what he meant, but it still sounded odd for him to say it. Not that he would ever mean what I...Ughâ€¦

"I'm fine. Just a little tired."

I thought I got enough sleep last night, but apparently not. I couldn't concentrate in class at all and after my third period, I went to the nurse's office. Our school nurse isn't authorized to do anything but let us take a nap in one of the cots, so that's what I'll do. There's a set of curtains that separate the cots from the rest of the office. It's quiet and warm, and I already had my stuff. Nothing is stopping me from sleeping the rest of the day away...

After some time had passed, I heard the door open again. There was a lot of coughing and stuttering. However it was sounded really sick. The curtains shifted and my new cotmate appeared. I head the door open again, as the nurse left the room. Something touched my arm.

"Psst. Hey."

I opened one eye. It was Jack.

"Jack...?"

"Hey. Are you alright?"

"Kinda." I sat up slowly, shaking my head. "Are you sick? " I asked.

"Nah," Jack laughed. " I just pretended to be sick to get in here. That nurse is a total germaphobe, she won't come back for awhile. How are you feeling?"

"I'm okay. " I held my face in my hands. I'm obviously not okay. But he doesn't need to know that. I felt the bed shift. Jack was sitting on the edge of the cot.

"Do you want me stay?"

I replied "Yes." Without even thinking. It was selfish of me to want to keep Jack in here.

We played cards and watched stuff on Jack's phone. By the time three periods passed, the nurse caught us blowing up plastic gloves and kicked us out.

I didn't care, it was fun. Jack has a way of making everything better. We sat in the guidance counselor's office until the bell rang. It was time for lunch then. We met Rapunzel and Merida in the cafeteria.

"Are you feeling better?" Rapunzel asked.

"Yeah." I replied.

"Are we still going to the poetry reading tomorrow? " Rapunzel said, looking concerned. I completely forgot about that. "Hang on." Merida said, crossing her arms. "Heccup and I were going to a concert."

"That's too bad " Jack said. "Because Hic already promised me he and I-"

What? When did I make all these plans? My head hurts...

"I'm sorry. I forgot. "

I slept through my next class, and Jack drove me home. I must have some sort of virus.

I woke up the next morning feeling like Hel. Well, you know, trapped. But instead of under Yggdrasil, I was stuck under the covers. Toothless was sitting on my stomach, watching me. My throat felt dry and no sound came out when I tried to speak. It looked like I wouldn't be able to do anything today. But you know what? That made me happy. I've been spending time with my friends nonstop. I needed a break. In fact, I hadn't made any models in a while. A little me time

would be great.

I woke up again sometime later. Something cold was pressed against my forehead. It felt familiar, like when my Mom used to do when I was sick. I think I heard voices then.

"He's burning up."

"I'll get him a cold rag."

"It's stuffy in here, I'll open the window. "

I went back to sleep and woke up some time later. A wet towel was pressed to my forehead. I felt a little better. Toothless was gone, so I went downstairs to see if he had food.

I could hear voices downstairs. I slowly made my descent, concerned. "Dad?" I called. I couldn't imagine burglars coming in here. Rapunzel was sweeping at the bottom of the stairs. "Hi, Hiccup! Feeling better?"

"Why are you in my house? "

The front door opened and someone came in. It was Jack, carrying groceries. "Oh hey, Hic."

I looked at him and walked away. He followed me to the kitchen, where Merida was working on something in a large pot.

"Oh yer up, Heccup. Did y'get the onions Jack? "

"Yeah." Jack sat the bags on the counter.

Rapunzel entered the kitchen then.

I looked at all three of them and repeated myself.

"Why are you in my house? "

"We came to see how you were doing." Jack said. Merida looked back at her pot. "You were lookin' kinda green, and Jack said we should check up on you. "

Rapunzel nodded, smiling. "Yeah, Jack was worried. He said he saw , who told him you were home alone."

Jack didn't look at me then, trying to avoid my gaze.

I was suddenly aware of the fact that I was wearing nothing but a old wrestlemania shirt and a pair of shorts.

I caught Jack looking at my bare legs then. He mumbled something that sounded like. "Their down there too..."

"How did you get in?" I asked, crossing my arms over my chest.

At that, they all looked at each other and laughed. I had a bad feeling.

"Did you guys break into my house?"

Jack rubbed his neck. "If you want to get technical, yeah. "

"But, my security system-"

"Ah had Jim handle that." Merida said, reducing the flames under the pot. "Rapunzel, could you mince the onions?"

I backed up slowly. "I'm gonna go back upstairs. And when I come back, hopefully this will make more sense. "

I retreated to my room, grabbed a change of clothes and went down the hall to take a shower. I let the warm water wash over me as I thought. Do friends break into your house to see if you're okay? Is that normal? I guess I'm being hypocritical here. I mean, we broke into Rapunzel's house to see if she was okay. But then, she was kidnapped and I'm sick. Plus, I don't have much experience in the friend department.

I returned downstairs to find Rapunzel dusting and Jack setting the table.

"Oh, hey. " Jack looked a little embarrassed.

He had been worried about me. I felt silly then. I would be worried if he was sick. I probably wouldn't break into his house, but I would worry.

Merida placed five bowls of soup on the table. Or, at least what I thought of soup.

"Oh, yer back Heccup. This is my family's special cure-all brew. I had to substitute a few things, but it should still work."

"Oh." I took a seat at the table. "Looks great, thanks." It was brown and lumpy, but it smelled good, so I figured it would be okay.

Rapunzel entered the room and they all sat down.

I put a spoonful of the cure-all in my mouth. At first it was sweet then spicy. I almost gagged on the stuff, I swallowed. Neither Jack nor Rapunzel had touched their food. They must have known something I didn't.

"How is it?" Merida asked.

"It's..." I rubbed my arm and looked away. "It's... so...uh...flavorful. Thankyou."

Jack looked like he was trying not to laugh.

"Thank you for everything. I know you all had better plans for today. I'm sorry if I was acting weird before. "

"You're welcome. " Rapunzel said, putting a hand on my shoulder.

"Wait." Something was still bothering me. "Who is that bowl of soup for?"

"Oh, I forgot." Merida said. "That one is fer the cat. Jack told me you don't feed him catfood."

I stood, horrified. I was one thing if she wanted me to eat it. It was another if she was going to give it to Toothless. "Wait a minute, Merida! "

For those of you confused, Jack has been checking Hiccup out since the story began to see how far his freckles go. Stay tuned to find out if he sees anymore.

18. Chapter 18

Chapter: Mistakes with Merida

"I'm so nervous. " Rapunzel said, gripping the wooden bench beneath her.

Hiccup took a sip of tea from his thermos. "Imagine how nervous you would be if you were Merida. " He kept his eyes glued to the field. Today, after weeks of training and begging, Jack had talked Coach Shang into testing Merida out. As Jack predicted, Merida was a excellent edition to the team. Today, she was making her debut in a game.

Anna rubbed her hands together in anticipation. It was a pleasant spring day, and a little warmer than usual. She and her sister Elsa were spending the weekend in Burgess, as Rapunzel requested. For the first time in forever, she was out of the house, enjoying herself. Anna glanced at Elsa, who had her eyes on the field below.

The Burgess Heffalumps were huddled together, discussing a strategy. Jack had a serious look on his face. He seemed different from the boy Elsa had met. True, their meeting had been brief, but Elsa thought she had Jack figured out. He had been charismatic, loud, and remotely funny. But Elsa couldn't find any traces of that in him now.

The huddle broke as the game began. Jack gave Merida a pat on the back. "You've already proven yourself to the coach, now you have to prove it to your team. You can do it."

Merida shook her head. "Don't worry about me, Jack. Ah've got this."

She surveyed the field before her. She could already see it in her opponents' eyes: the shock, the confusion, followed by amusement. It was like Jack had said before, no one was going to take her seriously.

Merida gripped the stick a little harder. "Ah'll just have to give them a reason to respect me."

Soon the game was underway. In mere minutes, the score was tied. Merida spent her time between defending Taran, their goalkeeper. The players zigzagged around the court, the ball bouncing from stick to stick, net to net. The opposing team, the Ogres, were putting up a good fight. Half the team seemed to be made of huge, living boulders. Taran stood his ground as three boys bounded towards him. Before one

of them could toss the ball into his net, Merida caught and deflected it back towards Jack, who waiting right outside their field of vision. Merida followed closely as Jack guided the ball back to the Ogres' net. He occasionally tosses it to his teammates as he ran, more concerned with scoring a goal than his own personal glory.

They were almost to the net. The ball was back in Jack's possession. There were two Ogres separating Merida from him. She ran, keeping her eyes on the goal, blocking their sticks with her own as she tried to pass them. Suddenly pain blossomed in her right knee as two sticks hit her hard. Merida tripped and tumbled to the ground.

"Merida!" Rapunzel yelled.

Hiccup frowned. "Did you see that? What is that stick made of?"

Jack looked back as Rapunzel yelled, and lost the ball as a barrage of players came running for him.

The ball, stolen, continued its way back to the Heffalumps goal.

"You can do it Heffalumps!" Anna yelled, cupping her hands around her mouth.

Jack got back to his feet just in time to see Merida go running after the ball. "Merida, wait!"

Merida ignored the pain and tried to follow the ball. She weaved her way between players, both teammates and enemies alike. They had been so close. If she could just get the ball back...

"Merida! Stop!" Jack yelled. She ignored him, she ignored everyone.

"I can barely see through her mask, but Merida looks pissed." Hiccup said, watching his friends run across the field. He winced as Merida was tackled down. "They're giving her a really hard time...Why isn't anyone blowing the whistle?"

"Hey!" Jack started shoving his way through the pile of boys. Merida crawled out from beneath them. Before she could stand, a stick smacked her in the back. Merida retaliated by smacking any Ogre in sight. Finally, the whistle was blown.

The referee walked onto the field and into the mess. "Alright kids, break it up. "

Jack crossed his arms. "About time, ref."

"You there." The referee tapped Merida. "That was unnecessary. Intentional player to player collision. Penalty for Heffalumps."

"Are you kidding me?!" Merida exclaimed.

Jack patted her on the shoulder. "Cool it Red. Let me guess ref, you didn't see one of the Ogres trip her up either? "

"I don't want to hear any lip from you, unless you want to forfeit.

Do you, Overland?"

"No, sir." Jack said, rolling his eyes. He began to pull Merida away. "Come on, Mer. Let's go have a chat."

"But!" Merida began in protest. "He can't just--"

"Chill." Jack replied, dragging her to Shang.

"Can you believe this?" Anna said, crossing her arms.

Elsa shook her head. "I don't think Merida should continue..."

"At this rate, she'll be all black and blue before the game's over." Hiccup said.

"Alright DunBroch. " Shang said. "It looks like they've got it in for you. The school board wasn't too thrilled when I requested for you to join. The league wasn't too thrilled either. They're determined to get you out one way or another."

"What should we do coach? Make a wall?" Jack asked.

"If everyone defends her, they'll be dragged into the attack. "

Jack looked up at the crowd. Hiccup looked concerned, Rapunzel seemed scared, while Anna was screaming words of encouragement. Elsa was staring at him with her arms crossed. Their eyes met. She mouthed something to him.

'Protect her.'

"I've got this coach." Jack said. "I'll be Merida's shadow."

Merida crossed her arms. "You watch me, Ah'll watch you."

Shang nodded. "Before you guys break out in song, let's get back to the game."

Soon they were back on the field, running after the ball. After two boys started following her, she headed back towards Taran. She began to move in a pattern, pretending to follow the ball, only to fall back towards the goal. Once the Ogres realized she wasn't a threat, they switched their focus to the other players.

Jack on the other hand, continued to fight for the ball. Once it was back in the Heffalump team's possession he began guiding it towards the Ogres' goal. With their attention on him, no one noticed Merida weaving her way back through the opposition. Once he was close enough Jack watched Merida out of the corner of his eye. He passed it to her and put him between Merida and the oncoming players. Merida made the shot, causing a deafening cheer from the stands.

"Now that's more like it." Hiccup remarked.

Jack and Merida spent the second half of the game watching each other as well as their teammates. While the referee tried to look for reasons to separate them, in the end the Heffalumps won, 5 to 4. By the end of the game Merida was battered and bruised. She retreated to the empty girls locker room for a quick shower. How would she explain

these to her mother? Sure, her father was aware she had joined the lacrosse team, but she begged him not to tell her mother. There was no way that Elinor DunBroch would allow her only daughter to play sports on an all boy team.

Jack leaned against his car, exhausted. He ached all over. 'One of these days, those Ogres are gonna get sued for those sticks...'

Hiccup handed him a water bottle. "You look like Hell."

Jack nodded. "I feel like hell."

"You were great out there." Anna said, nudging her sister. "Wasn't he great Elsa?"

Elsa nodded. "I normally don't watch sports...but you did very well."

Rapunzel looked up at the school. "What's talking Merida so long?"

"They did quite a number on her during the first half. She's probably all bruised. " Jack replied.

"I'm surprised her mom let her join the team." Hiccup said.

"Is her Mom strict?" Anna asked.

"Stuck in the middle ages more like." Merida answered, as she walked down the steps. She glanced around the parking lot, as if she was looking for someone. "Ah know you said the Ogres hit hard, Jack. Ah didn't know they hit THIS hard. "

"The Ogres are one of the toughest teams in the state. I was worried you wouldn't be able to make it through this game." Jack rubbed his shoulder. "But you did. And you were awesome. "

"Hey, Merida. " A familiar face appeared as Jim Hawkins crossed the parking lot, swinging a large backpack.

"I saw the game. You were great."

"Thanks." Merida said, putting her bag down. "Ah wish Ah felt great."

"How's your back?" Jim asked. "You got hit pretty hard earlier."

"It could use some ice. It's fine fer the most part. "Merida replied.

"Do you still want to go to Tiana's place?" Rapunzel asked. "You look tired."

"Ah might as well go." Merida said. "Once Mum sees my bruises, Ah won't be going out for awhile. Why don't you come with us Jim? The more the merrier."

Jim rubbed the back of his head. "Well, I'm a little strapped for cash at the moment..."

"Yeah?" Merida crossed her arms. "Lucky fer Ahm an heiress. Let's go."

They headed to Tiana's place on foot, as Jack couldn't fit them all in his car. It was one thing when he had to make room for the triplets and lilo. It was another to fit Elsa, Anna, Merida, Rapunzel and Jim in the back of his car.

There were still a few empty tables when they arrived at Tiana's place. They ran into Nani by the waiter station, who led them to a large window table.

Merida sat down first, flanked by Rapunzel and Jim. Hiccup sat on the left side of Rapunzel. Before Jack could sit next to him, Anna plopped herself in the seat, wedging him between her and Anna. As menus were passed around, Jack tried to strike up a conversation.

"So...Elsa. How do you like Burgess?"

Elsa looked up from her menu and glanced at him. "It's a nice town. The view from our hotel is lovely." Despite her expression, Jack could tell her words were sincere. There was something about her calm nature, her air of maturity. True, she was slightly older than them, but it was as if she was restraining herself for some reason.

Rapunzel watched them out of the corner of her eye. She had been worried when Anna had kept asking her questions about Jack. Anna had told her that she had a boyfriend and she was just curious, but Rapunzel didn't believe her for a minute. She seemed to be ignoring Jack at the moment, and instead talking to Hiccup.

"So, Hiccup, what do you like to do for fun?"

"Huh? Oh, well...I like to draw..."

"Hic is a great artist." Jack interjected. "You should see his stuff."

"Are you into art too, Jack?" Anna asked. "Elsa makes really nice sculptures."

"They're nothing special." Elsa said, her eyes on her menu.

"What kind of sculptures?" Jack asked.

Rapunzel's eyes narrowed. "So that's her game. Elsa doesn't seem to be interested though."

Nani appeared with a small notebook. "Are you guys ready to order?"

They ordered a large plate of beignets and appetizers. Rapunzel kept an eye on both sisters. She had not known them for long, but she knew they were good people. Anna had explained that they didn't get out much, so it was no wonder why she wanted to hang out with Rapunzel's friends. Unlike Anna, Elsa appeared indifferent to everyone. Jack was trying his best to keep the conversation going, but Elsa's answers were getting shorter and shorter. In no time she was downgraded from a

sentence to a simple nod or "mnhm."

'I suppose Jack is safe for now, but he's also persistent. Come to think of it, he's had a bunch of girlfriends. If Hiccup doesn't act soon, he might miss his chance...' "Hey, Jack."

"Yeah."

"Switch seats with me. I want to to talk to Elsa about something."
"

"Okay..."

Rapunzel gave Hiccup a nudge before taking her new seat.

Elsa looked up from her empty plate. "There was something you wished to discuss? "

Rapunzel blinked. "Huh? Oh, yes! About that vacation home in Florida..."

'Vacation home? Man these people have it all. ' Jim thought bitterly. 'I bet Mom would love a vacation. '

"So..."Jim started. "You come here often?"

"Ah've only been here twice before. "Merida replied. "But the food is good, so Ah think Ah'll make it a habit." 'Well, actually...Ahm not that hungry...' Her stomach felt like it was tied in knots. Her back ached with a vengeance. Merida wondered how long it would last. Her mother had been convinced that Merida had been spending all that time with Jack because they were dating. Once she found out they had been playing Lacrosse, she would have a fit. When Jack dropped Rapunzel and Merida off that evening, she prepared herself for the worst.

To her surprise, Elinor was waiting in the living room when they arrived.

"Yer father told me everything."

Merida's heart sank. She hadn't expected the lying to go on for long.

"So you went paintballin', did you?"

Merida's eyes widened. 'What?'

Rapunzel nodded. "Y-yes, paintball!"

Elinor snatched Merida by her wrist. "Look at these bruises...One would think you were in a rugby match. "

Merida chuckled nervously and glanced at Rapunzel, who did the same. So her secret was safe, for now. As long as nothing gave her away, this could probably go on for awhile...

Or rather, until two weeks later.

Hiccup was shopping in the produce aisle when he ran into Lilo and another little girl. The child had strawberry blond hair, and eyes

such a deep blue, they were almost purple.

"Hi, Hiccup." Lilo said, looking over a orange. "Oh, this is Sofia. She's my science partner."

Sofia curtsied. "Pleased to meet you."

"Oh, Nani needs someone to watch me on Saturday. She told me to ask you if I saw you."

"Okay, sure." Hiccup had been planning on going to the lacrosse game, but keeping Lilo and Stitch from terrorizing another babysitter seemed a little more important. He felt his phone vibrating in his pocket, grabbing a head of lettuce, Hiccup nodded goodbye and answered his phone.

"Hello?"

"Ah need a favor."

Merida sounded scared, and Hiccup wasn't sure where this was going. "What do you need? "

"Mum wants me to watch the triplets this Saturday."

"Oh boy..."

"And Rapunzel is going out with her cousins so she can't watch them."

"Uh..."

"And Ah can't take them with me, 'cause they would tell her Ahm on the team. You have to watch them, Hiccup! "

"Crapbaskets." Hiccup rubbed his arm uncomfortably. "I just told Lilo I could watch her Saturday."

"Ah don't suppose you could watch all of them..."

"Well, they aren't that bad when they don't have any sugar..."

"Oh thank you Hiccup! Ah'll make this up to you, Ah promise!"

"Yeah, you better. I'll pick up Lilo and Stitch and go to your house."

That Saturday Merida woke up with a feeling of uneasiness. Both her mother and father left early that morning, leaving her alone with the triplets. The game was at noon, and her mother would be back before five. She had already promised her brothers a big plate of beignets if they told their mother Merida was with them all day. She didn't like telling the triplets to lie to their mother, but she couldn't think of a better alternative at this point.

Hiccup showed up with Lilo and Stitch a little after ten.

"Ah've already spoken to the triplets." Merida explained. "They think Ah'm going paintballing again. Ah'll be back as soon as the game is over, Ah promise."

"Please do. I have to get Lilo back home at four."

"Alright. Be good, boys!"

It wasn't long before Merida was on the field again. Jack had told her that their opponents, the Bears, weren't nearly as bad as the Ogres. As the game began, she thought about the strategies they had talked about during practice. She scanned the crowd, that sane uneasiness growing in the pit of her stomach. Jim was watching and waving. She gave him a nod and turned her attention to the players before her. She would play this game like it was her last.

After two hours of vitamin TV, the triplets were bored.

"We can draw." Lilo suggested. "I've got lots of crayons and stuff in my bag."

"But I can't draw." Harris said.

"I can't draw in the lines." Hubert said.

"Well, you don't have to draw in the lines." Hiccup said. "A lot of famous artists don't in fact."

"Really?" Hamish asked.

"Yeah. I'll show you."

Hiccup spent the next hour instilling a little culture into the children with a history lesson. While the DunBroch triplets and Lilo were learning about the renaissance of art, Merida and Jack had their own issues.

The game was pretty close, but Merida's attention was divided. The feeling in her stomach had grown into a sharp pain. In retrospect, she had felt this way before, but thought it was her nerves. She felt hot and dizzy. In the middle of making a shot, she tripped and tumbled to the grass. Jack, who had been following her caught the ball and made the shot. Instead of getting up right away, Merida curled up on the ground. Running around had made the pain worse.

"Hey, Red!" Jack ran back to her. "You alright?"

Merida sucked in a huge breath. They were winning. They would win. She only had to go on for a short while longer. "Ahm alrightâ€¦ Just one minuteâ€¦"

The whistle was blown, and Shang was standing above her.

"DunBroch! What happened?"

Merida rolled onto her stomach in an effort to get up. "It's just a little sing. Ah'll be up in just a second."

"How long has this been going on?" Shang asked.

"Not...long."

Jack began to pull her up to her feet. "Maybe you should sit the rest out."

She latched onto his arm for support.

He lead her over to the bench. "Are you thirsty? Want some water?"

"Ahm beginning to see why he likes you so much." Merida said, sighing. "But Ah don't need you fawning over me Jack. Ah need you to win."

Hiccup heard the door unlock and breathed a sigh of relief. It was still early. He heard footsteps enter the living room but didn't look up.

"I was worried you wouldn't make it in time." He said, still scribbling.

"Hi Mum." Hamish said.

Hiccup paled as the three triplets ran to their parents.

Lilo looked at Stitch then at Hiccup. "..."

"Hello Hiccup. And...?"

" I'm Lilo. From the break-in. And this is my puppy."

Elinor forced a smile. "Oh right...that."

She turned to Hiccup. "Where is Merida?"

"Uhâ€|Hiccup rubbed his arm. "Sheâ€|"

Elinor's phone rang. She retrieved it from her purse and answered.

"Hello? Elinor DunBroch speakingâ€|"

"Hello, Mrs. DunBroch. This is Li Shang, your daughter's coach. I wanted to notify you that we're taking your daughter to Burgess Community Hospital."

"What!? What happened?"

"What is it dear?" Fergus asked.

"She appears to be in pain... as far as I can tell it's her stomach. I will notify you again once we reach the hospital." Coach Shang said.

"I-I see...Thank you." Elinor snapped the phone shut. "I'll need you to stay here a bit longer Hiccup. If you will excuse usâ€|Fergus, we're going to the hospital." Her voice cracked as she spoke. "Merida needs us."

"Wait, what?" Hiccup asked, standing up. Elinor and Fergus left without another word.

"Did something happen to Merida?" Hamish asked, tugging on Hiccup's shirt.

"I don't knowâ€|" Hiccup said. "But I'm sure she's fine." He walked out of the room and into the kitchen. Hiccup pulled out his phone and called Jack.

"Hey Hic. Now isn't a good timeâ€|"

"What happened to Merida?"

>"I don't know...All of a sudden her stomach started to hurt she didn't want to move. Hang on, I'm driving...Okay, so we're taking her to the hospital."<p>

"It was just stomach pains? Are you sure?" Hiccup asked.

"Jack." Shang said. "Now isn't the time for a social call."

"Merida's being kind of cryptic about it...Gotta go. We're almost there now."

He hung up.

Hiccup put the phone back in his pocket. "Stomach pains...That could mean anything."

"Stomach pains?" Harris repeated. "Let's google it!"

"What?" Hiccup said.

The triplets and Lilo sat around a strange miniature laptop Stitch had pulled from Lilo's bag.

"Let's see." Lilo read aloud. "Indigestion...Food poisoning...End-Ende-Endo-merto-shus? What's that mean? Hiccup, what's Endo-metro-shus?"

"Sounds gross." Hubert said.

"I bet it means your stomach explodes!" Hamish exclaimed.

Hiccup stood over them. "Guys, Merida will be fine. It's probably something common, likeâ€|"

"Appendicitis." The doctor told Fergus. "It will have to be removed. A routine procedure, you understand. I'm surprised she held out this long."

"Merida's really brave." Jack said. "I just wish she had told the truth earlierâ€|"

They stood in the hallway. Elinor stared at the closed door to Merida's room.

"As do I. To not only have Fergus lie to me and think she could get away with it..But to drag her brothers in to it as well. I'm very disappointed in her."

"You knew?" Jack asked.

"Of course! I got a call from the local paper about a reporter wanting to interview her. And Fergus told me as soon as he found out." She sighed. "Why did she lie to me? What was she thinking?"

"With all due respect Mrs, DunBroch." Jack began. "If you were my mom, I probably wouldn't have told you either. Merida said you didn't want her to play sports when she was younger, so she didn't think you would let her play now."

"Is that so." Elinor put her hands on her hips. "And you Mister Overland, are just as bad, recruiting my daughter for such a thing!"

"I'm sorry, but Merida's really good. You should see her play sometime-If you allow her to play after 's better than most of the guys out there. It would be a shame if she had to stop."

"I'll hear no more of this." Elinor said. "Until Merida is better."

After her surgery, Merida spoke with her mother.

"Ahm sorry, Mum." Merida said, sitting up in the hospital bed. "I messed up."

"We all make mistakes, Merida." Elinor said, sitting on the edge of the bed. "What's important is that we learn from them."
>"Ah understand, Mum. Ah won't lie again."<p>

"Good." Elinor stood. "I'll leave you be. Your teammates and friends are waiting outside."

"They are?"

"Yes." She crossed her arms. "But I talked with your coach. You can't go to practice for a week."

"Oh...you mean, Ah can play?!"

"For now." Elinor replied. "But if it turns out to be too dangerous-"

>"Thank you Mum!" Merida beamed. "Ah won't get hurt, Ah promise!"<p>

19. Chapter 19

References I forgot for the last chapter...

Sofia (Lilo's friend): Sofia the first (Playhouse Disney)

Ogres: Shrek

Bears: Brave

All of you waiting for the Hijack/Frostcup to come back will be pleased to know that it's back in full swing...

Kinda.

Chapter: Keeping up with Merida

It was another warm morning. The weather was slowly changing from pleasant to hot, as spring made way for summer. It was nice enough in fact, to make Hiccup oversleep. Jack, Merida, and Rapunzel had been sitting in Jack's car for about ten minutes. Checking the rearview mirror, Jack noticed Merida was frowning.

"What's wrong, Red?"

"Ah haven't seen Jim in a fortnight."

"A what?" Jack asked.

"Oh! I think it means two weeks. " Rapunzel said. "Oh, wow. It has been two weeks..."

"Did you scare him off?" Jack laughed.

Merida crossed her arms. "Ha, ha. Why don't you go see what's taking Hiccup so long?"

Jack shrugged and got out of the car. "Fine."

"Maybe he's studying more." Rapunzel said. "Exams start soon. And college admissions have already started."

Jack shivered. "Blech. I don't wanna think about those." He walked up the driveway. Meanwhile, Hiccup was running around his home frantically. If Toothless had not woken him up for breakfast, he would still be asleep. 'Hel's skirts!'

He ran out the door, and right into Jack. They fell, backwards and onto the ground. Jack groaned, rubbing back of his head. Hiccup found his face buried in Jack's hoodie, and the scent of 'Christmas' overwhelmed him for a moment. He sat up quickly. "I'm sorry!"

Jack didn't move. Instead, he stared up at Hiccup's face. Jack had a weird sense of Deja vu, as if this had happened before.

Hiccup began to panic. "Jack?"

"Yeah?" 'Why does this seem familiar? Because of that time at the movies? No, that's not it...'

"M-My hand...I can't get up..."

"OI! Lovebirds!" Merida hollered from the car. " We have school, remember? "

Jack let go, and Hiccup scuttled away.

Rapunzel gave Merida a look as the boys returned to the car. 'Who cares if we're late, if it means getting Jack and Hiccup together!'

Merida gave her a unimpressed look. "I know exactly what you're thinking Punzie, but there's a time and place for everything."

"

Rapunzel's eyes widened. Did Merida know?

It wasn't long before they were walking through the doors of Burgess high.

* * *

><p>Time seemed to drag on slowly as the day progressed. Jack spent half the day staring at the clock. Why did he have to go through this? When would he ever need Calculus or Physics? Why test him on things he would never need? He stared out the window, bored.<p>

"Mister Overland?"

Jack continued to stare out the window. Why couldn't it just be June already? Spring break had just come and gone in a flash.

"Mister Overland? Hello?"

The short, pudgy teacher stopped in front of his desk. "Yo! Earth to Overland!"

Jack was brought back to reality quickly.

"Oh, sorry Mr. Phil."

"That's to you Overland. Now get yer head out of the clouds and back into your books."

Jim watched the exchange with a twinge of jealousy. People like Jack didn't have to worry about their grades. Jack would probably be working at North's store in no time. Maybe if he was lucky, in five years Jack would give him a job...

Jim sighed. It wasn't Jack's fault that he was...well, Jack. At least Jim still had his Mom. His tired, overworked Mom that did her best to keep a roof over their heads. Jim wished he could do something for her, like get a great job and buy a house. But at the same time, Jim had bigger dreams. He wanted to see the world. He wanted to build things, to change lives. But in order to do that, he would have to study hard, and look for work. It wasn't like the bills could pay themselves.

That afternoon Jim went to the library to study. It was a little crowded this time of year. After all, exams were coming up.

As he searched for a empty chair he found Hiccup Haddock sitting alone by the window. "Hey Hiccup."

Hiccup looked up. "Oh, hi Jim. I haven't seen you in awhile. Merida was asking about you."

"Yeah?"

"Uh huh. She said she hasn't seen you either."

"I've been busy."

Hiccup glanced at the window. "Really?"

"Yeah..." Something about Hiccup's tone bothered him. "You know...Finals...Job hunting. "

Hiccup perked up then. "You're looking for a summer job? "

"Yeah. I need to start saving up for college stuff."

"My Dad is opening a gym right before summer break." Hiccup said. "I can ask him if you can work there,um...if you want."

The idea of a handout bothered Jim, but work was work.
"Okay...sure."

After devoting a hour to his studies, Jim decided to take a walk I'm the park. He had made a little progress today. But then he probably could have made more if he had not been thinking about _her_.

As if on cue he saw her jogging up ahead in the distance, her wild red hair floating on the breeze. She wore a green hoodie and sweatpants with sneakers. Even from far away, Jim could tell it was Merida. It seemed as if she was always far away. Whenever he saw her, she was on her way or returning from some grand occasion. It wouldn't be long before she left him behind completely.

He sighed and stopped walking. Checking the time, he realized it wouldn't be long before his mother got off work. He turned and made his way back out of the park.

Merida continued jogging until she reached the end of the park and doubled back. She was feeling hungry, so she figured a stop at the grocery store would do her some good. It was on her way that she received a phone call from Rapunzel.

"Hellllllooo, punzie."

"Oh my gosh Merida, you won't believe it! "

"Believe what?"

"I was talking with Elsa, and she said I could invite three friends to come to our summer home!"

Our. It was nice to see that Rapunzel already felt like they were family. Merida smiled at that. "That's great Punzie. Ah'll have to ask my Mum."

"Don't tell the boys,okay? It's a surprise! "

"Alright." She saw Jim enter the grocery store. "Hang on." Merida had a interesting thought. "Do you think instead of three, it could be four?"

They spoke awhile longer, as Merida stood outside the store. After some time had passed, Jim exited, this time with a slightly older woman. At first Merida was surprised, until she heard him call her "Mom."

She walked behind them for awhile, contemplating her next move. Was she going too far? She hadn't spoken to him in forever, and maybe there was a reason for that. Maybe he didn't want to see her. But why would that be? She couldn't recall saying or doing anything wrong. However, he had not called, or come to a game. It was as if a wall had been placed between them.

Jim and his mother were standing at a crosswalk. Merida took a deep breath, it was now or never.

"Hey! Jim!"

Jim turned reluctantly. "Oh...Hi, Merida."

His mother nudged him. "Ow! Mom, this is my friend, Merida DunBroch."

"Sarah Hawkins." The woman said, extending her hand. "Pleased to meet you. Oh! Aren't you the girl on the school's lacrosse team? "

Merida nodded, sheepishly. "Aye Mam, that's me." She took a deep breath. "So...Rapunzel's invited us all to her family's vacation home this summer. It would be for two weeks, in July."

"Us?" Jim repeated.

Merida nodded. "Yes, you too."

A second home just for vacations? Jim could hardly imagine living in one house, let alone owning two. He rubbed the back of his head. "I don't know...I was planning on working all summer...Gotta save up, y'know?"

Merida looked at the ground. "Oh..."

Sarah put her hands on her hips. "James Pleiades Hawkins!"

Jim cringed. "What?"

"Now there's being responsible, and then there's being stupid. You can not pass up a opportunity like this!"

"But, Mom-"

Sarah put a hand on her son's shoulder. "I know you want to get ready for college, and that's great...But you're still young and it's only your junior year. You have to take advantage of opportunities like this while you still can. Besides, pretty girls like Merida don't come calling everyday."

"Mom..."

Sarah frowned. "You're going on a trip son, and that's that."

Jim sighed and looked back at Merida. "Well, you heard her."

Merida smiled. "Good."

It was the next day when Rapunzel broke the news to Hiccup and Jack. Lunch had just began, and they were sitting at their usual

table.

"Two weeks?" It was an understatement to say that Jack was excited.
"That's awesome!"

"Where is it?" Hiccup asked.

"Myrtle Beach." Rapunzel replied. "I looked it up. They have lots of restaurants, and water parks. It's going to be so much fun!"

"Myrtle Beach...That's South Carolina, right? How are we getting there? Car?"

Jack inquired.

"Most likely." Rapunzel responded.

Jack folded his arms and put his head down on the table. "Sounds great..."

"Tired Jack?" Hiccup asked, eating a french fry.

"Mhmm." Was Jack's muffled reply.

"Have you been pulling all nighters? Don't push yourself." Rapunzel said.

"Can't help it." Jack yawned. "They just added a bunch of old shows to Netflix. Did you know Nancy Drew and the Hardy boys was a tv show?"

"Jack." Merida crossed her arms. "Maybe you should spend a little more time worried about classes instead of entertaining yourself."

"Yess, ." Jack replied, as if she were his teacher.

Merida turned scarlet. "Miss-I-What is that supposed to mean!?"

Jack laughed. "Exactly what it sounds like."

"He's not...Jim is just a friend!"

"Ouch..." Jack sat up. "Don't let poor Jim hear that. No guy wants to be friendzoned."

Merida looked at Hiccup. "Aye, Ahm well aware. You should take yer own advice."

Jack frowned. "And what do you mean by that? "

Merida sighed. "At this rate, you may never know."

Hiccup stared back at her, confused. 'What is she talking about? Could it be that she...'

'Has feelings for Jack? '

* * *

><p>Hiccup didn't know why the thought had never occurred to him before. Merida and Jack spent a lot of time together. She knew him almost as well as Hiccup did at this point.<p>

Hiccup pondered about his two friends as he made dinner that night. Toothless wandered back and forth, nudging him for scraps. A sigh escaped Hiccup's lips for the fourth time that hour, causing Stoick to ask, "What's wrong son?"

"School stuff...Oh, Dad! Um, Rapunzel's family has this summer home, and they invited me to go there for two weeks in July." He turned the flames down. "Can I go?"

"In July?" Stoick stroked his massive beard. "I don't think so son. The gym is opening at the end of June. I need you to be there everyday."

"As what? A punching bag? I hate to break it to you Dad, but this physique doesn't fit the muscle man vibe."

"Son, I need someone to keep things running the best way to do that is have a watchful eye in the front."

* * *

><p>"Wait a minute...So the reason your Dad is keepung you from going away is he needs you to be a desk jockey?" Jack asked, surprised.<p>

Hiccup cradled his cell phone to his ear. He could hear the disappointment in Jack's voice.

"But that's not all...I'm also in charge of towels."

"You have got to be kidding me. "

"I wish. Have fun without me. "

"Uh, no I can't. That's kind of impossible."

"We can do stuff before the trip...and after. There's plenty of summer Jack."

"Not enough...Actually, no. Summer is fine. Winter however, needs another month. "

Hiccup laughed. "I don't think I have ever met someone who loves Winter as much as you, Jack Frost."

"Except maybe my Dad." Jack replied, irritated. It didn't look like Hiccup was going to convince his Dad. If it wasn't for Hiccup, they would have rescued Rapunzel. Jack was going to have to take matters into his own hands.

It was the following afternoon when Stoick heard the doorbell rang. Hiccup had a art club meeting, and would not be home for awhile. He lumbered over to the door.

Opening it, he found Jackson Overland.

"Afternoon, ."

"Heccup isn't home right now. "

"I know." Jack said, looking up at the house. "I'm here to see you."

"Oh? About what? "

"The trip in July."

"Oh." Stoick crossed his arms. "Heccup isn't going."

"Yeah, I know...But he should!" Jack looked Stoick in the eye. "Hiccup's earned this. If it weren't for him, Rapunzel wouldn't even know her parents were alive! Don't you think he deserves this?"

"I do." Stoick began. "But Heccup has led a very sheltered life. He needs to get a job and start preparing for the future. He can't keep tinkering in his room forever."

"Hiccup isn't that type of guy and you know it. He knows a lot about responsibility. He's functioning surprisingly well for a teenager."

Stoick shook his head. "Long before this trip was decided he gave me his word that he would work at the gym."

"Did he? Or did you tell him to?"

"I'm not discussing this with you any further, Overland. I have business in town."

"Great." Jack said, putting his hands in his pockets. "So do I. We can take my car. I was going to drive Hiccup home later."

"Very well then." Stoick replied. "But I'm not going to change my mind. "

"Uh huh..." Jack took out his keys out. 'That's what you think.'

They got into the car.

"So, exactly where are we headed?"

"North's."

Jack smiled. "Perfect. You know what I hear is perfect? The sunset on the grand strip. I hear its like a different world there. A totally different view on life...that you can see from the big skywheel! I bet Hiccup would love to see that. Up high, the city below... And there are a lot of things to do...Amusement parks, theatre, lots of restaurants... Yeah, Myrtle Beach is full of cool stuff. You can even drive golf carts on the street! Definitely different from Burgess. And different is good...Really good for development."

Stoick sighed. "Overland, are you going to be a nuisance this whole ride?"

"Perhaps." Jack kept his eyes on the road.

Soon they were parked across from the department store.

"So, what brings you to North's ?"

"I'm building a deck." Stoick answered, getting out of the car. "Sometimes a man needs to build something with his own two hands."

"Your son likes to build stuff too...And it's always nice when something is made by hand. You know what else was made by hand? Myrtle Beach."

"Yer kidding."

"Nope. The island was built up, its not naturally occurring. Kind of like the island Hiccup is building in his room. "

"Heccup is building a island?"

"Yep, a scale model of Berk...Well, ancient...viking filled Berk. He's been working hard on it." Jack got out of the car. "Who knows what other kinds of things he could make...with the right inspiration."

"Y'mean like..." Stoick sighed. "Myrtle Beach? "

"Now you're catching on, Mr. Haddock!" Jack smiled.

Your references for this chapter:

Phil Satyr: Philocetes the satyr from Disney's Hercules

Sarah Hawkins: Treasure Planet

20. Chapter 20

You are all very cool and totally kawaii. (Resists the urge to laugh) I was at a con, and ran into a couple (?) cosplaying as Jack and Hiccup.

Can someone please explain to me why this website keeps removing the name of the department store?

Chapter: Summer with Merida

"Good Morning, this is the St. North's customer service department, Jack speaking. Can I help you ?"

"Is this P F Chang's?"

"...No sir, this is St. North's department store."

"Do you sell Orange chicken at that one?"

"No sir." Jack sighed. "This is not a restaurant. We sell clothing, cosmetics, furniture, and home appliances. This is not a restaurant."

"But, what about my chinese food?"

"Have a good day sir." Jack replied before putting the cordless phone on its cradle. He leaned back in his chair and closed his eyes, sighing. North had been talking a lot with Stoick recently. And, as fathers like to so, they had chatted about their sons. As Hiccup had recently started working, North decided Jack also needed more experience in the workplace. And so, Jack had gone from being the occasional worker to a customer service representative.

Jack didn't mind. He spent most of his time sitting at a desk and answering questions. Jack usually spent most of his summer in the store anyway, due to the air conditioning. He had a love-hate relationship with summer. It was nice enough to go out, but too hot in his opinion to do anything. Soon his lunch break arrived. If he stayed in the store he would be expected to work, so Jack left the comfort of St. North's and stepped out into the sun.

It wasn't long before he was wiping sweat from his brow. He headed for shade, ducking into the Hooligan gym. Hiccup was standing behind a desk, wearing a bright orange t-shirt. "Welcome to Hooligan's. Oh, Hi Jack." Eighties pop played as the citizens of Burgess whipped themselves into shape. Jim was stocking towels on a rack. He gave Jack a wave before disappearing into another room.

"How's work Hic?" Jack asked, leaning on the desk.

"Pretty decent. Are you on break?"

"Yeah. When are you taking yours?"

"In ten minutes. I'm just waiting for my replacement."

"Awesome! Let's get slushees from the corner store."

Someone cleared their throat loudly. A customer approached the desk. He was around their age with pale skin and a muscular build. There was a dark blue tattoo on his face that matched three claw marks on his arm. His hair was pulled into a long braid.

"Gimme ten tokens for the spinner."

"The max is six, Dagur." Hiccup replied. "And you used it already. Sorry."

"Oh please. Like anyone else in here is strong enough to use that thing. Hand over the tokens."

Hiccup crossed his arms. "..."

Jack stopped leaning on the desk. "Listen pal. Hic says you only get six. You got your six. Why don't you go have a protein shake or something?"

Jim walked up to them. "Okay Hiccup, go take your break. I've got this."

"Thanks, Jim." Hiccup stepped out from behind the desk.

Dagur blocked his path. "I'm not done talking to you,Haddock."

Jack stepped in front of Hiccup. " Yeah, you are."

Dagur and Jack were the same height, making their staring contest easier. Hiccup patted Jack on the arm. "Come on Jack, let's go." Jim went behind the desk, and Hiccup pulled Jack towards the entrance. Dagur and Jack continued their staring until Hiccup pushed Jack out the door.

"What's wrong with that guy?" Jack asked.

Hiccup sighed. "Well...Do you remember the Viking wrestling division?"

"Yeah. It was your dad...Stoick the vast, a.k.a the hairy hooligan. Your mom Valhallarama...Oswald the agreeable a.k.a the beserker..."

"That guy you just met is Oswald's son."

"What? No way! Oswald was the calmest guy I've ever seen in the ring. That guy seems like a total nutcase."

"Yeah. Dagur is a real piece of work. He wants to go pro. Apparently he moved here because he's going to Munsters University this fall."

"I hope he transfers to another college before we get there, then."

"Yeah."

They walked up the block to a small convenience store. They found Merida and her brothers by the slushee machine. "Now boys don't fight. Y'each get one."

"Hey Red, triple threat." Jack said, greeting them.

"What's up?"

"Just going to the park. What are you to doing out? Don't y'have work?"

"Lunch break." Jack said, fanning himself. Rapunzel appeared from further down the aisle. "Hey guys! Wow, Jack, you look like your melting! "

Jack nodded. "I feel like I'm melting." He wiped more sweat from his forehead. "Maybe I'll cut my hair again, after I dye it..."

"Dye? " Rapunzel repeated.

"I have to dye it back this Thursday...But I don't want the color to run. It's gross."

"Why do you have to dye it back?" Hiccup asked.

"Special event at the store." Jack replied. "I might just stop bleaching it for awhile. North wants me to work in the store for

like...forever."

"No more Jack Frost." Merida said.

"Apparently." Jack sighed.

"But what color was it before?" Rapunzel inquired.

"You can't tell?" Jack frowned.

"Nope." Merida answered. "Well, yer eyebrows are dark, but so are Rapunzel's."

Jack ran a hand through his hair. "It's...brown, like Hiccup's. Well, it's not as nice and way darker..." He shrugged. "You know, boring."

Hiccup grabbed a cup. "So, brown is boring huh? Thanks."

"What? No. I was talking about my hair. Yours isn't boring Hiccup." Jack said, patting Hiccup's head. "Your's is soft and shiny and like, a bunch of different colors."

Rapunzel patted Hiccup's head. "You're right! It's really soft!" She grabbed Merida's hand and placed it on Hiccup's head. "Oh, yer right!"

Hiccup was getting redder by the minute. "Could everyone please get out of my hair?"

It wasn't long before they were all walking back towards the Hooligan gym. Hiccup slurped his slushy slowly. What would Jack look like with darker hair? He was already handsome, there was no question about that. They said their goodbyes and he headed back inside.

Jim was sitting at the front desk, looking bored. "Great, you're back. Break time!"

"Merida, Rapunzel, and the triplets are headed to the park." Hiccup said. "You can probably still catch them."

Jim nodded. "Alright." He came from behind the desk. "See ya."

The song changed as Hiccup took his place at the desk. He hummed softly to himself, drumming his fingers on the desk.

Jim jogged down the block and caught up with Merida, Rapunzel, and the triplets at the corner. "Hey!"

The boys giggles automatically when he approached. "Looook, its Jim." Hamish said. "Merida's boyfriend." Hubert added.

"Kiss him!" Harris demanded.

Merida turned scarlet. "Boys!"

Rapunzel laughed nervously and looked at Jim. "They uh, have overactive imaginations."

Jim chuckled. "I bet."

Merida tucked a few stray locks of hair behind her ear, the blush on her face receded slightly. "So...Yer on break?"

"Yup. I feel kinda bad leaving Hiccup there though. We have a real piece of work to deal with."

"What do you mean? " Rapunzel asked.

"This tool named Dagur." Jim sighed.

"Every time I turn my back, the next thing I know he's bossing Hiccup around."

"He sounds like a real jerk." Merida said. "How long has this been going on?"

"Almost two weeks." Jim responded. "Hiccup is a real trooper though. Anyone else would have decked him by now."

Hiccup stared at the clock. There were only a few hours to go. Another eighties rock ballad was blasting through the speakers. He pulled a registration sheet from a pile, turned it over, and began to draw. His nightfury was pretty good now. He had painted it three times now and been pleased with the results. He thought about Toothless.

Would he be alright while he was on vacation? He had never been separated from his cat for such a long time...or his father for that matter. Hiccup had been surprised when Stoick told him he could go on the trip. Jack had apparently gotten on Stoick's to the point where the hairy hooligan had given in just to shut him up. Hiccup had to admire Jack for his tenacity. He smiled. Jack was a real piece of work...

"Hey Haddock! Get your head out of the clouds and get me a ice pack!" Dagur was standing in front of the desk again, arms crossed. A angry purple blotch had formed on his arm. Hiccup put down his pen. "I warned you not to press so much weight. Does it hurt? "

"Only a wimp like you would think that-" Dagur began before Hiccup poked the bruise, causing Dagur to yelp in pain.

"Yep, I thought so." He pulled a ice pack from a minifridge behind the counter. "Be more careful, okay?"

"Thanks." Dagur grumbled as he snatched the ice pack and walked off.

Jim returned from his break twenty minutes later looking slightly disheveled. "Hey." There were grass and dirt stains on his shirt. "I had a run-in with the boys."

"I figured as much." Hiccup retrieved another shirt from behind the desk. "Those kids really like you."

"They're great. Of course, I always wanted siblings."

"I know the feeling, but you get to be a honorary DunBroch if you survive watching them three times."

"Really?" Jim said, taking off his shirt. "I'll keep that in mind."

He put on the new shirt. "Let me level with you Hic..." Jim rubbed his neck, nervously. "Do you think Merida likes me?"

Hiccup looked away, uncomfortable. "I dunno. I mean...do you really like her?"

Jim laughed. "I thought it was kinda obvious."

"Sometimes it isn't. You guys hang out alot but..." Hiccup rubbed his arm. "Are you sure she knows how you feel?"

"...Not exactly."

Hiccup looked him in the eye. "I'm not an expert or anything, but I think you should tell her exactly how you feel about her."

'Don't be a coward...Like me.'

The following day was peaceful, as Dagur did not show up. Merida, however, appeared around eleven. Jim and Hiccup were at the front desk once again.

"Hello, boys. How're things?"

Jim glanced at Hiccup before nodding at Merida. "Pretty good."

A pudgy man approached the desk. "Someone puked in the locker room...And it got on the ceiling."

Hiccup winced. "I'll go...take care of that."

Jim shook his head. "No, I'll do it." He gave Merida another glance before walking away. Merida waited until Jim was out of earshot to speak again. "Heccup..."

"Yeah?"

"What do you think could Jim?"

"He's a pretty decent guy. A real hard worker too." He rubbed his arm. "What uh...what do you think of Jim, Merida?"

"Ah dunno."

"Do you uh..." He swallowed hard and prepared himself for a punch. "Like him?"

Merida's eyes widened for a moment and Hiccup flinched.

She looked around. "Is it that obvious? "

Hiccup breathed a sigh of relief and tried not to smile. "To everyone in a five mile radius." She gave him a playful punch on the arm.

"You're one to talk."

"Ow!" Hiccup jumped back. "And what is that supposed to

mean?"

"Heccup please." Merida rolled her eyes. "You might as well wear a sign on yer forehead."

* * *

><p>Hiccup spent the rest of the day mulling over what Merida said. Was his crush on Jack that obvious? Then again, if it was, Jack wouldn't have thought he liked Rapunzel... He had the next day off, so he took a early morning walk. His feet took him to the park and eventually, downtown. To his surprise, St. North's appeared to be open. He headed over to the store. As he approached it, he gawked in surprise. St. North's was always a nice looking store, but today it looked extra special. The windows, floors, and door had been polished to a shine. A large welcome banner hung above the door. Men in suits stood by the front, giving shoppers intimidating stares.<p>

As Hiccup entered he noticed Nicholas and a young man standing by the main counter. As he got closer he realized that the young man was Jack. Neither North or his son were the suit and tie type, so this was a odd sight. Jack had dyed his hair a dark shade of brown, making his blue eyes all the more dazzling. Both he and North wore a serious expression, making the scene even more strange.

"Hello Mr. North...Jack...What's going on?" He asked. "Everyone looks a little tense."

"Our biggest client is coming today." North replied.

Jack rolled his eyes. "The most annoying one too."

"Be nice, Jack."

Jack sighed. "You might want to get behind the counter Hic, you're in for a real show." Hiccup came behind the counter.

Lumiere handed him a tracksuit top. "Please wear zis. As not to offend his highness."

"His highness? Is someone royal coming?"

"Yep." Jack said. "A royal pain in the-"

"Jackson!" North shushed him. "I hear the limo. Put on your best smiles, everyone!"

The front doors were opened wide. A small man in a white suit entered, followed by several woman carrying bags of rose pedals. Music began to play as a man with a wireless mic sitting on top a piano was pushed into the store, following several musicians.

"_The hippest cat in all creation has come to grace your nation And maybe even buy a thing or twooooo..._" Confetti cannons exploded, and soon petals and glittering pieces of paper filled the air.

Hiccup stared in shock. "Uh..."

The singer continued to serenade them.

"_He's decided to grace your presence with his always magnificent essence so you better be ready to show him something newww!_"

Acrobats and dancers entered the store entire procession was making its way towards the main desk.

"Don't stare like that, Hic. It'll piss him off." Jack warned.

"What's his name!?" The initial singer cried.

"KUZCOOOOO!" They all chorused. More confetti rained down.

A red and gold carpet was rolled out. More petals were thrown as a man entered. He had shoulder length ink black hair, and tanned skin. Large turquoise earrings hung from his ears, and Hiccup was sure each one was worth more than his house. He was dressed in a bright red suit, canary yellow shirt, and sky blue tie. His golden sandals were trimmed with gold. He struck a pose. "Boom, baby!"

"Is he incredible or what?"the singer asked.

"KUUUUZCOOO" They all sang, louder this time.

Hiccup stared in disbelief. 'I don't even know what to think right now.'

The singing died down as Kuzco approached the desk. Hiccup tried not to make eye contact with the man.

"Presenting his royal highness, his maginificent majesty, the one and only, Emperor Kuzco." "What do you have for me boys?" Kuzco looked at Jack. "Yuck. What's with that dye job, kid? You look like a beaver died on your head."

Jack clenched his hands into fists, but did not speak.

Kuzco looked around.

"We have added several new designers to the store." North said. "We 'ave selected clothing for your, your majesty." Lumiere said. "If you will follow me..."

Kuzco strode behind him, touching random items here and there. As he and Lumiere went up the escalator, Jack breathed a sigh of relief.

Hiccup blinked. If he had not seen it, he wouldn't have believed it. "Well...that just happened." He looked at Jack. "Does this happen a lot?"

"Almost every year since I was twelve." Jack replied. "Emperor Kuzco his royal higness, king of the tiniest country you've never heard of, comes here, makes a mess and buys like, half the store." He ran a hand through his hair. "_If_ we're lucky. Last year he said my 'creepy old man hair' threw off his groove and he returned three hundred thousand dollars worth of stuff five minutes after he bought it."

Hiccup stared at the confetti covered floor. "Wow." He looked around. "If he's such a pain, why do you stick around? "

"Jack will be next owner of store." North answered. "He must be good friends with big clients."

Jack crossed his arms. "You might want to get out of here while you still can. If he sees you leave before him, he might freak out."

Hiccup rubbed his arm. "Oh...kay. Well, it was nice seeing you then, Mr. North. See you Sunday, Jack."

Jack smiled. "Okay, see you Sunday, Hic."

* * *

><p>Anna dug through her closet until she found a green sun dress."What do you think of this one?" She turned to Rapunzel, who sat on the edge of the bed, surveying the mess around her.<p>

"It's nice." Rapunzel replied.

"Okay." Anna tossed the dress to the left. "That goes in the maybe pile."

There were only two days until the big trip. Anna had yet to pack, and rummaged through her belongings.

Rapunzel laid back on the large bed. "I don't think you need so much stuff, Anna. It's only a few weeks."

"I know, I know...But we never go anywhere or do anything together! I want to have as much fun as I can, and look good doing it."

She tossed a shirt into the 'maybe' pile. "Speaking of which, I have to check Elsa's stuff. Knowing her, it'll just be a bunch of blue dresses."

Rapunzel laughed. "Jack is like that. He wears a lot of blue too."

A smile crossed Anna's face. "Perfect. They can be blue together."

Rapunzel sat up then. "Hold on."

"What? You said Jack is single right?"

"Yeah, but I don't think he's looking for someone right now."

"How come?"

"He'sâ€¦ kinda in a thing with someone."

"A thing?"

"Yeah...There's someone who likes him...Who I think he likes back."

Anna dropped another dress on the floor. "Oh. _Someone_, huh? Is it

you, Rapunzel? " Rapunzel's eyes widened. "What!? No! It's H-H..."

"Heh?"

"Henry...etta. Henrietta! In our art class! Yes."

"Oh. Well, never mind then. But, you never know. Jack might change his mind if he saw my sister in a bathing suit." Anna laughed. "If she ever bothered to go near the water."

* * *

><p>Sunday came a little too fast in Stoick's opinion. As he drove Hiccup to the bus station, he tried to give his son advice. "If you get lost, try to find a police box. And be careful crossing the street...There are a lot of car accidents in that state..."<p>

"I'll be fine." Hiccup assured him, looking out the window. " I made Toothless a bunch of meals. Some of them are in the freezer. Try not to feed him the same thing two days in a row. He's picky."

"I'll keep that in mind." Stoick replied, as he brought the car to a stop. Hiccup could see Merida and Jim watching the DunBrochs and a woman he assumed was Jim's mother walk away.

"Well, see you in two weeks, Dad."

"Have a good time, son."

Hiccup hopped out the car and approached his friends.

"Hey." Hey dropped his duffel bag on the ground. Merida laughed suddenly, prompting Jim to look away. "What's so funny?"

"Oh...Jim was saying that before he met me...He liked you first."

"Wha?" Hiccup was confused. He looked at Jim, who looked at Merida as if she had two heads. She narrowed her eyes at him and nodded her head.

Jim suddenly nodded and looked away. "Yeah..." He looked behind Hiccup and then said in a louder voice. "I totally liked YOU, HICCUP. Before Merida."

"Isn't that sort of backwards?" Jack asked. Hiccup almost jumped. Jack was standing behind him. The dye had been removed from his hair, but he wore a bucket hat over it. "Now I could understand if it was the other way around." Jack said, slinging an arm over Hiccup's shoulder. "I mean, Hic here is nice and a good cook...And he doesn't punch you in the arm every time he disagrees with you, unlike some redheads I know."

"Are y'saying you prefer Heccup over me, Overland? " Merida asked.

"I'm saying any sane person would." Jack replied.

Hiccup stood, frozen. 'What...What does that even mean?'

He suddenly aware of the minty scent that often accompanied Jack's appearance. He glanced sideways at Jack. The distance between them had grown slightly, as Hiccup had to look up to see Jack's face.

Jack released him, picking up Hiccup's duffel bag. "Well, let's get going. The sooner we get to Arrendale, the sooner we get to the Arendelle's house and the sooner we start our vacation."

"We've been on vacation for almost a month, Jack." Merida replied, as they walked into the station.

"You've been on vacation, you mean. " Jack corrected. "The three of us have been working." Merida rolled her eyes. "My mistake."

Jack looked at his phone. "Four tickets for the 3:30 bus...gate five."

He looked around. The station was bustling with activity, as travelers arrived, waited, and departed.

"Over there." Jim said, pointing. There was a short line at gate five, as the bus was already boarding ahead of schedule.

They quickly got in line and boarded, flashing their tickets at the driver. The bus was almost full. Seats were scattered here and there, leaving each of them to sit with a stranger. Hiccup snagged a window seat and stuck his backpack under the chair. His duffel bag was loaded under the bus. He put on his headphones and closed his eyes.

'Here's to four hours of solitude.'

* * *

><p>Hiccup woke up two hours, later, to Jack shaking his arm. "Wake up, sleeping beauty." Hiccup rubbed his eyes. The bus was nearly empty.<p>

"Did we arrive already? "

"Nah, this is just the rest stop. We have twenty minutes left. I'm going to get something to eat. Do you want anything? "

"Water is fine."

"Water? Okay, I'll be right back." Jack departed the bus.

Hiccup stretched. He checked his phone. "It's after five. I think Bolt is on..."

He watched the show until Jack returned.

"The person next to you was on the wrong bus." Jack explained, sitting down. "So she left. " "Aren't we in the middle of nowhere? How is she getting back?"

"Actually, she left before we departed." Jack looked away. "I've been sitting next to you the whole time."

"Oh..." Hiccup sipped his water. "Sorry...and thanks, for the water."

Jack leaned back in the chair. "It's no big deal." He glanced at the phone. "They uploaded the new Bolt already?"

"Yeah. Do want to see it?"

"Of course! I want to see if Penny is going to have the operation." The other passengers returned to the bus, and soon they were on the road again. Jack and Hiccup occupied themselves by watching videos on Hiccup's phone. Delays and traffic elongated the ride. After awhile they grew bored.

* * *

><p>It wasn't long before Hiccup was asleep again. He shifted, trying to find a comfortable position. Eventually he nestled himself soft, with the familiar scent of mint and pine... Hiccup opened his eyes. Jack's head was resting on his own. His face was buried in Jack's shirt.<p>

They had moved the bar separating their seats earlier, so there was nothing to keep them apart. Jack was of course, asleep. Hiccup resisted the urge to move. Jack's breathing was slow and even. It had a calming effect on Hiccup, but he resisted the urge to go back to sleep. As comfortable as Jack was, he was Jack. He was not Hiccup's personal pillow. But he was so comfy...

After the bus reached it's destination, the passengers slowly filed out. Merida paused before leaving the bus. She looked at Jack and Hiccup, who were still asleep.

Taking out her phone, she smiled. "Now there's a pretty picture."

She took several pictures before Jim asked; "Shouldn't we wake them up?"

Merida shrugged. "Ah guess." She pinched Jack, jolting him out of his sleep.

"Ah!" Jack swatted her hand away. "What the heck, Red?"

Merida laughed. "Sorry, but nap time is over." Jack groaned and looked at Hiccup, who was still asleep. He started shaking him, which caused Hiccup to turn away from him. Jack laughed, but kept shaking him. "Come on, Hic. Time to get off."

"Fine..."

After they gathered their belongings, they exited the gate. They found the Coronas were waiting for them on a bench outside the station. Rapunzel welcomed them with hugs. The are was cool, but far from cold.

"You guys are kinda late." Rapunzel said. "What happened? "

Jack shrugged. "Traffic."

Mr. Corona dusted off his pants. "Well, now that you kids are here, we can get on the road." "Perhaps we should take a break, dear." Mrs. Corona suggested. "They've been on that bus for hours."

"Ach." Merida rolled her shoulders. "At least let us stretch for a bit."

References for this chapter

Dagur: DreamWork's Dragons Defenders of Berk

Kuzco: Disney's The Emperor's new groove

Henry: The default name used in a lot of frostcup fics... (or henrik)

Arrendale: town version of Arendelle from Frozen

Bolt: tv show from Disney's Bolt

21. Chapter 21

So many reviews...So many favs and follows..WHY ARE YOU ALL AWESOME!?

Uh...Chris Pine is a good singerâ€|? Frank Sinatra songs are nice?

* * *

><p>Chapter: Summer with Merida part two<p>

Rapunzel looked at her phone. Merida had just sent her a message. She looked up at

Merida, who sat across from her. They were at a fast food restaurant

built inside the station.

Merida had sent Rapunzel a image. As it loaded, Rapunzel looked over at her parents.

They stood in line, waiting to order. She smiled. A year ago, she would have never

thought this was possible. Gothel had never taken her anywhere outside Burgess. At

the same, she didn't make the outside world sound all that friendly. She looked back

down at the phone. The screen showed her Jack and Hiccup, asleep and entangled.

She gasped in surprise, causing everyone at the table to look at her.

"What's wrong Goldie?" Jack asked.

Rapunzel shook her head. "Nothing! Nothing's wrong." She laughed nervously and put

the phone back in her bag.

After eating, they returned to the Arendelle house. Elsa and Anna were ready to go and

waiting in the parlor. Kai and Gerda were also on vacation, but had left a week earlier.

This left Kristoff to house sit while they were away.

"Jack! Merida! Hiccup! " Anna squinted at Jim. "Wait, don't tell me...I

remember...Jerry...James...Jean Bob...Jim!"

Jim nodded. "Yep, Jerry James Jean Bob Jim, that's me."

Jack laughed. "Good luck fitting that on a business card."

In order to reach Myrtle Beach, they would riding down in a rented van. The trip was

shorter than it would have been if Hiccup and his Burgess friends had taken buses.

They loaded their things into the large van. Rapunzel's parents took turns driving as the teens slumbered. Rapunzel woke up to sight of a golden sunrise.

Light filled the car, giving each one of its passengers a heavenly glow. She traced the clouds on the window with her fingertips. She wanted to paint the sky. Looking behind her, she saw Hiccup in the next row. He was wide awake, with a sketchbook and pencil in his hands. Palm trees lined the streets, and few people out this early.

They reached the summer home a short while later. By then most of the car's occupants were awake.

The Arendelle summer house was just as impressive as the manor. It was a ocean front beach house, built two storeys high. The backyard had a large infinity pool, and was otherwise comprised of sand.

After the car was parked, they filed out and entered the house.

"And I thought the other house was huge." Jack said. "No one does it like a Arendelle."

"And don't you forget it." Anna remarked, dragging her suitcases behind her.

"This house was father's pride and joy." Elsa said, looking up at the high ceiling. The walls were painted a warm yellow, and decorated with paintings. After the entryway

There was a spacious hallway, leading to the stairs. A grand piano sat at the foot of the stairs. Across from the stairs was a small guest room, kitchen and another hallway leading to the backyard.

"Okay, before you get settled, let's have a talk about the rooms." said. "We have a total of four and a half bedrooms here."

"This summer home was originally a guest house." Elsa explained.

"That's right." Mrs. Corona nodded. "Now, we want to keep it two kids to a room, but one of you will have to sleep alone."

"We figured you kids would sort things out." added.

"I say we do rock,paper,scissors." Jack said.

"I have no problem sharing." Rapunzel interjected.

Hiccup nodded. "Same here."

Merida shrugged. "Eh, let's see what happens."

Jim nodded. "I'm in."

Elsa and Anna glanced at each other.

"Rock...Paper...Scissors says shoot!"

"Looks like it's mine, guys." Jim said, smiling in triumph.

Merida crossed her arms. "It makes more sense that way, I guess."

Jack put an arm around Hiccup. "Looks like it'll be me and you, roomie!"

Hiccup laughed nervously. "Great."

"Now some of the rooms have two twin beds, but others have queen sized ones." Elsa said.

Merida grabbed Rapunzel's hand. "Come on, Goldie. Let's get a double room. I'm a sleep kicker."

"We'll let you kids get settled in and rest. At one we'll go into town." Mr. Corona said.

They ascended the stairs, all accept for Jim who headed to his own room. Jim understood what Mrs. Corona meant by half a room. The guestroom he was assigned was small, featuring only a bed, and a small dresser. He set down his belongings. 'This must be the half room. Why do I feel like I got the short end of the stick?'

Hiccup followed Jack down the hall and into one of the bedrooms.

"It's one of the queen sized ones...Oh well." Jack shrugged.

Hiccup dropped his bag. 'This can't be happening.' Sharing a room with Jack, he could handle. Sharing a bed with Jack, howeverâ€¦

He walked back out into the hallway and knocked on another door. "Heyâ€¦"

Rapunzel poked her head out. "Oh, hi, Hiccup!"

Merida opened the door wider. "You got a one bed room, didn't you?"

Hiccup rubbed his arm. "Yeah...I was kinda wondering if you wanted to trade-"

"No." Merida crossed her arms. " Now you go in there an' sleep with Jack."

"Th-That's right!" Rapunzel exclaimed. "Get back in there!"

Rapunzel crossed her arms in triumph. This was just the advantage Hiccup needed. There was no way Hiccup would be able to spend two weeks in there without something happening.

They slammed the door in his face. Hiccup walked back to the room, defeated.

Jack was already unpacking his things into the drawers. "Hey, Hic. Do you want the left side, or the right side of the bed?"

"The...left." Hiccup answered. Sitting on the edge of the bed, he sighed. 'Looks like I'm not getting any sleep on this trip.'

He took out his phone. "I better call my Dad."

Hiccup dialed Stoick's number. He waited for his father to pick up.

Jack sat on the other edge of the bed, causing it to shift slightly. Hiccup's breath hitched. Was it really going to be this awkward for two weeks? He should have at least tried doing rock, paper scissors when he had the chance.

Jim unpacked his things and plopped on the bed. So this was how the other half lived. For the first time in his life, he was on a real vacation. The journey had been long, but he could tell it was worth it. Nothing to worry about for two whole weeks? No cops hassling him about his skateboarding? No Mom nagging him? This was going to be perfect.

After a few hours of lounging they left the house to explore. Sand gave way to boardwalk and eventually, the streets.

"There's plenty to do here." Anna said. "The beach, shopping, the aquarium, amusement parksâ€¦"

"I want to see the aquarium! " Rapunzel said. "I heard its really nice! Plus, I've never been to one before."

At Rapunzel's request, they headed for the Ripley 's Aquarium. Unfortunately, it was closed for the day.

"The attendant said some bigshot is in there." Jim explained.
"Whoever it is paid to have the place to themselves."

Merida crossed her arms. "That's ridiculous. Punzie, is there anywhere else you wanted to go?"

Rapunzel played with a stray lock of hair.

" I dunno. Anything is fine, really."

"There's always next time." said. "Why don't we look around for now?"

They explored until five, at which point they had a early dinner at a restaurant and then returned home.

Jack went to take a shower, leaving Hiccup alone. Hiccup was grateful for the silence. He sat on the bed, knees pulled to his chest. Three times today he had caught himself reaching for Jack's hand. It was a subconscious thing, but he was a little more annoyed with himself each time it happened. What if he did it in his sleep? What if he talked in his sleep?

Jack returned from the shower in his pyjamas. His hair was far from dry, as he rubbed it with a towel.

"I'm back."

"Uh...yeah." Hiccup wasn't sure where to look. "I'm... gonna... go..." He grabbed his stuff. 'Before this gets any more awkward than it needs to be.'

"Have fun!" Jack said as he walked out.

Hiccup walked down the hallway and into the bathroom. It was still foggy from the last yanked his shirt over his head. The room still smelled like shower gel. He took a deep breath. 'Okay, chill out Haddock.' He removed the rest of his clothes and stepped into the shower. The shower mat was still squishy. 'Jack was just in here...' He shook his head. 'No, let's not think about Jack in the shower...Aaaand there's goes my imagination at work.' He turned on the water. 'Let's not think about Jack. Let's think about...Dragons...Dragons...and hot waterâ€|and steam...Oh! How about a dragon that spits boiling water! Hot, scalding water...Hmâ€|I have to work on this when I get out of here...'

He pondered dragons a while longer in the shower. While he was busy, Jack decided to wander around the house. He considered making himself a snack, but after finding Jim and Merida alone in the kitchen, he figured he'd take himself elsewhere. He eventually settled on the piano. It wasn't too old. He wiped off the dust and took a peek inside. 'It's still in pretty good condition.' He sat on the small piano bench.

"A steinway. Very nice. Let's seeâ€|."

Hiccup returned to the room to find it empty. He was partly relieved by this, and still absorbed in his plans for the scaldron dragon. He sat in bed and sketched for awhile until he heard music coming from

downstairs.

"I walked across... an empty land...I knew the pathway like the back of my hand" _

Hiccup looked down from the top of the stairs.

Jack was seated at the piano, his focus on the keys in front of him. He sang softly.

"I felt the earth... beneath my feet...sat by the river and it made me complete" _

"Do you hear that?" Anna asked. She sat on the floor with Rapunzel while Elsa read a book.

"I do. It sounds like someone playing the piano."

"Let's go see!" Rapunzel said.

"If we must." Elsa said, closing her book.

They ventured out and found Hiccup on the stairs.

"Hey-" Anna began before Hiccup shushed her.

"So tell me when you're gonna let me in...I'm getting tired and I need somewhere to begin" I came across an empty _ He stopped. Merida and Jim had come out from the kitchen. "Oh, hey. Well to Overland's after dinner theatre. We're currently taking requests."

Anna went down the stairs. "Do you know um...Say a little prayer? That song from My best Friend's wedding!"

"Well, I don't know your best friend, so"

Anna crossed her arms. "That's not what I mean, the-"

"I'm kidding! Hang on, I think I've got it" Jack tested the keys. "Just give me a second"

"The moment I wake up" Jack began.

"Before I put on my makeup!" Anna chimed in.

"I say a little a little prayer for you." Anna and Rapunzel chorused.

"While combing my hair now...and wondering what dress to wear now..." Jack sang.

"I say a little prayer for you." Anna and Rapunzel chorused again.

"Forever and ever, you'll stay in my heart and I will love you!" They sang together.

"Forever and ever, we never will part

Oh, how I love you

Together, forever, that's how it must be

To live without you

"Would only mean heartbreak for me!" Rapunzel's Mother sang,
descending the stairs.

"Welcome to the party, Mom!" Rapunzel said.

Jack smiled. "Awesome, I always wanted backup singers." He looked at
the keys.

"I run for the bus dear...While running I think about us,
dear"

"At work I just take time

And all through my coffee break time

I say a little prayer for you

Forever and ever, you'll stay in my heart

And I will love you

Forever and ever we never will part

Oh, how I'll love you

Together, forever, that's how it must be

To live without you

Would only mean heartbreak for me

I say a little prayer for you

I say a little prayer for you

My darling, believe me

(Believe me)

For me there is no one but you

Please love me too

Answer his prayer

And I'm in love with you

Answer his prayer

Answer my prayer now, babe

Answer his prayer

Forever and ever, you'll stay in my heart

And I will love youâ€|"

It was sometime later when the singing finally stopped. Jack was tired, and laid in bed staring at the ceiling. Hiccup on the other hand, was curled up and sketching. The evening's musical interlude had been unexpected, but Hiccup was grateful for it. Jack was always good at breaking the tension. He recalled Mavis telling him about Jack's piano skills once in passing.

Most of Hiccup's bedtime worries had disappeared. Jack was jack at the end of the day. He would probably think nothing of it if he woke up a little too close to Hiccup. He didn't seem too bothered on the bus. Not that Hiccup knew that, butâ€|.

After Hiccup was satisfied, he closed his sketchbook. Jack had fallen asleep, his chest rose and fell slowly. Hiccup put his things away before turning off the lamp. In the dim lighting , he tripped and fell onto the bed. Jack didn't stir, so Hiccup did his best to make himself comfortable. The only sounds Hiccup heard were a fan and Jack's breathing. He closed his eyes and folded his arms across across his chest. Maybe he overreacted a little.

Jack turned over, and groaned. "..."

Hiccup felt something touch his arm. He didn't move. It was just Jack's elbow. 'No big deal.'

Jack turned again. He could feel Jack's sigh against his forehead. 'Nope. Not a big deal.' Hiccup turned on his side. Something hit his back. It was Jack's hand. 'Okay...' Hiccup turned back over. He couldn't really see Jack, but he could tell he was close. 'So he moves around a bit. It's not like he-OKAY STOP NUZZLING ME IN YOUR SLEEP JACK WHAT IN THE NAME OF HEL.'

Needless to say, Hiccup didn't get much sleep that night.

They all went to the beach early the next morning. Neither Elsa or Jack looked too pleased. According to the weather forecast, they were in for a real scorcher. By noon Mr. and Mrs. Corona snuck off to have lunch alone.

Jack sat on a towel, under a umbrella. He didn't understand why anyone liked the beach. The sand was too hot to walk on, there was nowhere to hide from the sun, and sand would wind up in everything. He glanced at Elsa, who sat under the umbrella next to him. She was absorbed in her book, and like him, had no intention of going near the water.

"Hiccup! Come swim with us ! " Merida called. Hiccup, who had been busy burying Jim in the sand with Rapunzel a few feet away, nodded.

Anna looked at the waves in front of her, then back at her sister. "Elsa! Do you want to build a sand castle?"

"No." Elsa didn't look up from her book. "Go swim Anna. "

Anna shrugged. "Okay, bye..."

Jack looked up. Something had caught his eye. Hiccup, who had remained on land this whole time was taking off his shirt. Jack swallowed hard. He had been waiting for this. Ever since he had first saw them on Hiccup's neck, he had to know: how far the freckles went.

Hiccup yanked the shirt off, and Jack finally got what he wanted. The freckles kept going down Hiccup's back. They disappeared somewhere past Hiccup's swimtrunks. There were tons of them, some in clusters. "Like constellations..." Jack muttered to himself. Hiccup turned, and he could see them going across his stomach as well.

"Thirsty, Jack?" Elsa said.

Jack tore his eyes away from Hiccup. "What?" He wiped the sweat from his brow. Jack glanced at the small cooler between them. He opened it. "Oh no...We're out of ice."

Elsa closed her book. "I'll go get some more." She retrieved her wallet and sun hat from her bag.

"Hang on. I'll come with you." Jack said, standing. "I wanted to take a walk anyway."

"Very well." Elsa replied, putting on her hat. "Let's go then."

Merida returned to land sometime later. Jim tilted his head in her direction as she approached. "Hey."

"Where are Jack and Elsa?" Merida asked.

"I think they went to get ice." He tried in vain to move his arms. "Mind digging me out of here?"

Merida crossed her arms. "Why would I do that? They aren't done with you yet. Punzie is looking for seashells for yer bra."

"My...Bra?"

"They're turnin' you into a mermaid."

"Can't I be a merman instead?"

"Nonsense. Besides, I think you would make a pretty mermaid."

Jack walked alongside Elsa as they neared the boardwalk. Elsa wasn't very talkative, but Jack wasn't one for silence. At the same time, he was glad she was that way. He felt like he didn't have to put on a show for her. He could be himself, kind of like when he was with Hiccup.

They reached a small store front. Elsa bought two bags of ice, and they returned to the beach.

"I can carry one." Jack said, reaching for the bag.

"They aren't heavy." Elsa responded.

"I bet not, but they're cold." Jack replied. "Which is why I want to

carry one. Hand it over."

Elsa sighed. "You're stubborn. " She handed him the bag.

"So are you. " Jack said, taking the bag. "But stubborn people perservere. If Hiccup and Merida weren't stubborn, we might not have gotten Goldie out of that house."

"Yes." Elsa nodded. "We must be thankful for that. But stubbornness can also be an issue...Like my sister's mission to pair me up with every man in a three mile radius."

"Well, I'm sure she has good intentions. Not that I'm one to talk. I thought Rapunzel and Hiccup would make a good couple once."

"They do seem to have similar interests." Elsa said.

"Yeah, well Hic made it pretty clear he didn't like her thst way when I told him to make a move on her."

"Make a move...?"

"Well, tell her how he feels, anyway. He wasn't too happy when I set up a date for them."

"Maybe he had feelings for someone else."

They had reached their beach spot.

"Maybe. " Jack said, dumping ice into the cooler. "And now he doesn't trust me with that information."

"Or, there could be another resson."

"What? "

"Maybe he isn't sure how he feels yet." Elsa put the other bag in the cooler.

"That's a possibility." Jack sat down.

"Maybe..." Elsa picked up her book. "You aren't sure how he feels yet. "

Jack didn't reply.

"You like him a lot, don't you? " Elsa didn't look up from her book.

Jack rubbed his neck. "Is it that obvious? "

* * *

><p>Jean Bob: Nest's The Swan Princess<p>

A dream is a wish your heart makes: Disney's Cinderella (song lyric)

But you have to make them happen, it all depends on you: Disney's The Princess and the Frog, Almost there (song lyric)

Jack Overland's

Somewhere only we know by Keane

I say a little prayer for you by Dionne Warwick

22. Chapter 22

Chapter: Falling for Hiccup

Jackson Overland wasn't sure when he fell in love with Hiccup Haddock. He assumed it was sometime during the previous winter. Maybe it was that inciting incident, when Hiccup took him home. Maybe it was after the drunken confession on New year's. It might have even been the first time he made Hiccup upset, and he realised he never wanted to see Hiccup cry again.

At the moment, he had plenty of time to think about it. Here, sitting in the hospital, staring out the window. It was such a depressing room. He closed his eyes. If he concentrated, he could take himself back...Back to summer, his friends, and Hiccup.

On the second day, after they returned from the beach, Jack took a long shower. He hated the sand. 'It just has to get into everything, doesn't it?' He squeezed more gel out of the tube and lathered up his hair.

His talk with Elsa had been...enlightening. Were his feelings for Hiccup so obvious? He wasn't even sure what they were. He was certain he had left the 'close friend' realm a long time ago. You just don't have dreams like_ that_ about people who are 'close friends'.

He shook his head. Now wasn't the time to think about that. Now was the time for action.

He had planned this perfectly. Before reaching Myrtle Beach, he had inquired about the sleeping arrangements. All he had to do was get Hiccup alone. Now, that had been accomplished. Jack was going to use the next two weeks wisely.

He returned to his room, brimming with confidence. Hiccup, to his surprise, was asleep. He was lying on his side. Jack sat on the edge of the bed. He moved a strand of Hiccup's hair from his face.

'It's not fair if you're defenseless, Hic.'

Hiccup didn't stir. He was dead to world, as if he had not slept the previous night. He hadn't of course, as Jack had kept him up by constantly moving.

Jack retracted his hand. He decided it would be best to leave the room. He'd clear his head...maybe go eat a snack...

Mr. Corona and Anna were working on dinner in the kitchen, so Jack sat the piano. He played by ear, trying to work out the melody of a song. Anna appeared shortly.

"Could you go get the others? Dinner is almost ready."

Jack nodded. "Uh huh." He headed back upstairs. He found Elsa and Rapunzel in their respective rooms. Merida and Jim however were missing. He thought nothing of it. He wasn't anyone's parent.

Instead of calling Merida he went outside. Hearing laughter, he looked up. Jim and Merida were up on the roof. 'Well, that's one way to get privacy.' He decided to give them a minute or two before calling them down. After they were taken care of, it was time to get Hiccup. Jack found that Hiccup was a heavy sleeper. He shook him gently. "Hic.."

"..."

"Hiccup, dinner."

"...I don't want any, Snotlout."

"Don't want any what?"

Hiccup opened his eyes. "Jack?"

"That's me." Jack replied, smiling.

Hiccup sat up quickly. Something had to be done about their sleeping arrangement, or he would be napping everyday. "W-What is it?"

"Dinner is ready."

"Dinner...right..." He slid off the bed. "I'll be there in just a sec!" He left the room quickly and headed down the hall. As he walked, he noticed Rapunzel was alone in her room. "Can I talk to you for a sec?"

"Sure Hiccup. Did something happen?"

"It's just..." He walked into the room.

Jack walked into the hallway. "Where did he go?" He heard voices coming from Rapunzel's room.

"This isn't going to work, Rapunzel. I can't share a room with him."

"Why not, Hiccup? This should be a dream come true for you!"

"Wha-Bu-I mean...This is inappropriate! Jack is sharing a room with me thinking we're just friends...But I'm not thinking we're just friends. I'm thinking all kinds of stuff...He's showing up in my dreams for Thor's sake!"

"Hiccup..." Rapunzel took his hands in hers. "A dream is a wish your heart makes. And wishes can come true...but you have to make them happen, it all depends on you."

"Okay...Thanks fairy godmother." He rolled his eyes. "I'm going to ask Jim if he wants to switch after dinner."

Rapunzel crossed her arms. "Hiccup, stop it! Why are you fighting this?"

"Because there is no 'this'!" He snapped. He turned to leave. "I'll see you at dinner."

Jack quickly stepped into his room as Hiccup came out of Rapunzel's. He had heard everything. He took a moment to process what he had heard.

Hiccup passed by the open doorway. Jack exhaled. It was now or never. He grabbed Hiccup's hand, pulling him back into the room.

"Jack!"

Jack held onto his hand. "We need to talk."

"Uh...yeah." He felt his temperature rising. Jack wasn't letting go. "But...I mean...I can't..." Hiccup looked anywhere but Jack's face. "I can't share a room with you anymore. I have to switch."

"No." Was Jack's reply.

"B-But..." Hiccup tugged on his hand again. "I ju-" Jack sighed and pulled him into a hug.

"I'm not letting you go, Hiccup."

Jack said, his lips lost in Hiccup's hair. "I can't."

Hiccup was quiet then, his heart pounding in his ears. He could feel Jack's hands tighten around his waist. You didn't hug friends that way. He knew what Jack meant. It was a sudden realization, a burst of happiness, and a huge relief rolled into one. Rapunzel was right, he had been fighting this. Maybe if he had said something sooner...

They stayed still for what felt like an eternity, before Jack loosened his grip and took a step back.

Jack raked a hand through his hair, his face slightly flushed. "We should probably go eat."

Hiccup smiled. "Yeah. "

Merida stared at Rapunzel. She had come into the room skipping and giddy.

"Did something happen?" Elsa asked.

Rapunzel giggled. "What? N-no!" She bit her lip, smiling. "Not really. "

Hiccup and Jack entered shortly, taking their seats next to each other.

"Good, everyone is here." Mrs. Corona said. "Let's eat. "

Jack couldn't concentrate that night. He spent half the night stealing glances at Hiccup. A few times, he caught Hiccup staring back. And Hiccup couldn't help it really. It wasn't until the meal was reaching its end until Hiccup realized something.

He was spending the next twelve days with Jack.

He was nervous. He had never done this before. He sure that Jack liked him, and he definitely liked Jack. But they were sharing a room. His stomach felt like it was full of butterflies. Or maybe, baby dragons. Baby common greens. All screeching and flying around...

Soon they were finished. According to the chart, it was Anna's turn to do the dishes, but Hiccup did them instead. He needed time to think. What was going to happen next? A declaration of everlasting love? He blushed and shook his head.

Jack retreated back to the piano. He figured it would be best to keep his hands busy. Jim entered the room. "Hey, Jack. Mer wants to see you. She's up in Elsa and Anna's room."

Jack went upstairs. By this time, Hiccup had finished with the dishes. He retreated to his room, relieved Jack wasn't there. He pulled out his sketchbook. 'Common greens...A nest of them...' He looked around. Something was different.

'Wait...where's Jack's stuff?'

Jim knocked on the door before entering. "Hey, Hiccup." He was carrying all of his belongings.

Hic put down his sketchbook. "Jim?"

To Jack's surprise, Merida wasn't in Elsa's room. Instead he found Anna braiding Rapunzel's hair.

"Oh good." Anna said as he entered the room. "I needed another pair of hands. Have a seat, Jack. "

"Jim, what are you doing? " Hiccup asked.

"Moving in." Jim said, putting his bags down. He checked the top drawer. Some of Jack's things remained. "Let's just get these out of here.

"Wait a minute-WHY are you moving in? What happened to Jack? "

"Oh, he had to go. New sleeping arrangements. We all thought might be fun to trade rooms around. Rapunzel is with Anna, Elsa is downstairs, Merida is with Jack, and I'm with you."

"When was this decided?"

"Oh about, two minutes after dinner. Actually we were all texting each other throughout dinner. You and Jack seemed a little..." He smirked, "Preoccupied so we decided to let you in on it now."

Merida entered the room. " Is that Jack's stuff?"

Jim nodded. "Yup. Here you go."

Jack tended to Rapunzel's hair for a minute or so until he heard laughter coming from the hallway. He stuck his head out just in time to see Merida running into her room, holding his boxers.

"Hey!" He shouted. "What the heck are you doing?!"

Merida snickered. "Stealin' yer knickers."

Jack's eyes widened. 'Red's lost it.'

Hiccup came out into the hallway. "Everyone switched rooms, Jack." He rubbed his arm. "For...some reason. You're with Merida now."

"Why?"

"I have no clue."

Jack crossed his arms. "You're kidding."

"Nope." Merida beamed.

entered the hallway. "Alright kids, it's almost eleven. Time for bed." She returned to her room.

Jim shrugged. "You heard her."

Hiccup reluctantly went to his door. "Good night, Jack. "

Jack sighed. "Good night, Hiccup."

He followed Merida into the room and closed the door. "You mind explaining what's going on, Red?"

She sat on one of the beds. "I do mind, actually."

"Red..."

"Okay, fine. We call it the Hiccup Haddock protection act."

"The what?"

"It's a joint effort to protect Hiccup's virtue."

Jack sat on the other bed. "That's not funny."

Merida nodded. "Neither is your track record. Jim said he's seen you with at least ten different girls. A year."

"What does that have to do with Hiccup?"

"He's not some random tramp, Jack. We don't want you to hurt his feelings."

"What makes you think I would treat him that way? You make it sound like I have some sort of problem."

"Isn't it true that you'll go out with any girl that approaches

you?"

"Hey now. I'm an equal opportunist. Why shouldn't I at least try a date with the girls that like me?"

"Well, it isn't just you. We all agreed that sharing a room with the person you like might be too stimulating."

"You think I'm going to jump his bones, don't you?"

Merida didn't reply.

"Wow. Thanks."

"It's not just you! Maybe Hiccup isn't ready to spend two weeks in there with you!"

"Maybe that's for Hiccup to decide. Good night, Merida."

Hiccup was relieved. As happy as he was, he was still somewhat terrified. He suddenly wanted to spend as much time with Jack as possible. At the same time, he wanted to spend as little time alone with him as possible. It was confusing, but instead of dwelling on the subject, he went to bed. "Good night Jim. "

The next day they decided to go to the water park. It was away from the boardwalk, so they had to walk for awhile to reach it. It was another scorcher, and neither Jack nor Elsa was too happy to be out in the sun.

Jack looked ahead. Hiccup was walking arm and arm with Rapunzel. He looked back at Jack, who smiled at him. Hiccup returned the gesture, before looking forward and blushing. There was no need to rush anything.

They went on ride after ride before stopping for lunch. The hard plastic seats were almost too hot to sit on. Jack squirmed on his chair. Their 'lunch' consisted of skinny hot dogs and soda, as the food prices were high.

Hiccup was never one for amusement parks. True, he never really went to them, but he didn't get the point. Though he had to admit there was something about roller coasters. 'Soaring through the air, the wind cutting through you. I bet it's like riding a dragon. If you could ride one...'

Then there was the food. Did the hotdogs really need a five dollar price tag? 'You can buy a whole pack for that much back home.' He looked at Jack, who seemed to be staring into space. 'Wow. Jack looks like he's melting.'

After much deliberation, they decided to ride one more ride before leaving.

"I'll sit this one out." Elsa said, sitting on a bench.

"Same here." Jack said, sitting beside her.

They watched as the others walked away.

Elsa fanned herself with her hat.

"So...How are things...with...Hiccup? "

Jack closed his eyes and leaned back. "Good. I think. I kinda told him I liked him. Kinda."

"Are you sure you were...clear?"

"I guess so. It was nothing dramatic. I mean, I figured I'd talk to him more after dinner, but things didn't work out that way." 'I just need to get him alone for a minute. But that's easier said than done, considering Merida thinks I'm a fiend.' Jack had to admit his relationship history was far from perfect, but he didn't think it was anything too terrible.

'Okay, so I've had a couple of girlfriends...flings...encountersâ€¦.' He sighed. 'That was before Hiccup.' He opened one eye. 'Sometimes I just needed someone to hang on to. It was the same as a drink or dare. Just something to pass the time. I don't think I ever hurt them. At least, not on purpose.' He blinked. He had already accidentally hurt Hiccup he do it again? Maybe Merida wasn't wrong after all. Would he get bored with Hiccup like he did with the other girls? He didn't think that was possible. Maybe it was time for some more advice.

He glanced over at Elsa. Her head was slumped forward, her hands at her sides. "Hey Elsaâ€¦" She didn't reply. There was something weird about her stance. "Elsa?"

He shook her arm. "Elsa? Elsa!" 'Oh crap, that heat got to her.' "Hang on, I'll get you out of the sun." He folded her arms and pulled her up, to carry her on his back. "Where's the..."

Hiccup and the others stood in line. Twenty minutes passed before they climbed the long stairway and were prepped for the ride. It was a flight-type coaster, so instead of seats, they would be strapped down by a guard and harness. Hiccup felt as if ice coursed through his veins. The ride looked scary, but he assumed the impending adrenaline rush would help. He looked down. They were high up, and he could see the whole park. But, what he didn't see was Elsa and Jack.

Jack took Elsa to a lounge area by the park's entrance. He called Mrs. Corona, who instructed him to take Elsa home. They took a expensive, yet short cab ride back to the house.

Elsa retired to her room. The air conditioning and cool sheets were just what she needed. She undid the braid in her hair and settled down for a long nap. She was grateful for the room change. Now she could rest in peace without Anna suddenly bursting in.

Which Anna did, one hour later.

"Omigosh Elsa are you okay!?"

Elsa was startled from her sleep by Anna, who quickly went to her bedside.

"What...Yes, Anna." She sat up slowly.

"Are you sure?" Anna felt her forehead. "You're still a little red. Jack said that you passed out."

"Apparently..."

"He carried you to the lounge. " Anna giggled. "That's so romantic! Maybe he does like you!"

"Anna..."Elsa held her face in her hands. "Jack likes Hiccup, not me."

"Really? Huh, I never would have guessed." Anna had been the only one oblivious to Merida and Rapunzel's true intent in the room switching. "Oh well, there are other fish in the sea. Speaking of which, I saw this guy looking at you when we were at the beach and-"

"Anna, STOP." She crossed her arms. "I do not care if a guy is checking me out. It isn't my concern who Jack likes. I do not need a boyfriend. I do not want a boyfriend." She sighed. "I don't want to be with anyone. I'm happy the way I am, so please just leave me alone!"

Anna looked down. "Oh...okay." She played with his fingers and stood. "I'll just...go." She turned and left, closing the door behind her.

Elsa sighed and slid back down. She wrapped herself in the covers. "Oh, Anna..."

Elsewhere, Hiccup was in his room, alone. 'I hope Elsa's okay. Passing out sounds kinda scary. It's a good thing she wasn't alone.' He shuddered at the possibilities. He had read stories about girls being abducted while on vacation.

Jack headed upstairs. Rapunzel was shopping with her mother. He had seen Jim and Merida outside, meaning Hiccup most likely alone. As he passed the room, he found what he was looking for; Hiccup, sitting on the bed, sketchbook in hand, looking completely absorbed in his work.

Jack entered the room. "Hey."

Hiccup looked up, and almost dropped his book. "O-oh. H-hi..." 'Great move there, Hiccup. You don't sound nervous at all.'

Jack raked a hand through his hair. 'Say something, dummy.' "So I heard the hotel down the strip is going to have a fireworks show. A rooftop party too." He heard overheard two girls talking about it in the lounge. "It's after curfew. Do you wanna go?"

Fireworks? After dark? With Jack?

"Just the two of us, I mean. " Jack added, for clarification. " I think they would notice if we all went."

"Oh...kay."

Jack smiled. "Great! I'll pick you up at eleven."

Hiccup smiled, nodding and looking away. "Okay." 'Alone with Jack? After dark? And fireworks?' "Sounds like a plan."

Anna suddenly ran past, causing them both to look.

"What was that about?" Hiccup asked.

"I dunno..." Jack shrugged. "So, uh...see you later." Jack left. Talking to Hiccup had been so easy before. Now he was beyond nervous, and he couldn't understand why.

Hiccup went to bed around ten that night, as was the curfew. Jim had fallen asleep almost immediately. Hiccup couldn't hear anything beyond the hum of the air conditioning and Jim's light snoring.

His heart was beating rapidly. Was this really happening, or was it another stupid dream? He pinched himself. Nope, definitely happening. He turned his head and glanced at his phone on the nightstand. It was almost eleven. He slid out of bed slowly, as to not startle Jim. He slowly changed from pajamas to jeans and a t-shirt. Never had he snuck out after dark. At the same time, he had never had a reason to.

He took a deep breath. 'Keep it together, Hiccup. You've gotten this far.'

His phone vibrated. It was Jack.

****Are you up? -Jack****

****Yeah. -Hiccup****

****I'll be there in a minute- Jack****

Jack looked over at Merida. Sure enough, she was asleep. He crept out of the room and walked over to Hiccup's. 'Here goes nothing.'

Hiccup opened the door slowly. When he saw Jack, he smiled. "Hi." He whispered.

Jack had grown accustomed to that crooked grin. "Hey, yourself. Let's go."

It wasn't long before they reached the front door. Hiccup had tripped twice in the dark, and Jack had hit his foot on the piano, but they were snickering all the while.

Hiccup stepped out into the cool night air. The stars were already out, a billion twinkling lights guiding them towards their destination. By the time they reached the streets, the stars had been replaced with street lamps.

Jack had been holding his hand since Hiccup first tripped on the steps. He pulled Hiccup along in silence, looking ahead. The streets were still somewhat occupied. They followed a group to the hotel, through the lobby, and on to the elevator. While the elevator was large, it was now very crowded. Hiccup found himself squeezed against a wall. He couldn't see Jack, but they were still holding hands. He felt Jack rub his thumb against his knuckles. The elevator dinged, letting them out on the roof. As the passengers filed out, Jack

dragged Hiccup behind him.

The rooftop had various plants, a pool, a small stage, and several tables. They found one by the roof's edge, the only thing keeping them from the city below was a short fence.

"When does it start?" Hiccup asked, breaking the silence.

Jack looked at him for a moment before replying. "Any minute now."

Sure enough, a large red spark shot up into the sky, before exploding with a brilliant light. There were cheers and shouts from the crowd. Firework after firework shot up into the sky. It was beautiful.

Jack looked over at Hiccup, and it was obvious that the boy was infatuated with the glowing lights. Jack smiled then. Hiccup's face was much more beautiful than a bunch of lights. It wasn't long before Hiccup caught him staring. He tilted his head, confused.

Jack decided to take that as an invitation. He leaned forward until Hiccup's face was millimetres away. With one hand he caressed Hiccup's face. Hiccup sat still, his eyes lost in Jack's. He could feel his heart racing, and hoped Jack couldn't hear it. It was one thing when Jack looked at him. It was another when he gazed at him like this. He couldn't tell what Jack was thinking. Still, he closed his eyes, aware what would happen next.

It was a awkward kiss, half need and half necessity, as if it was what the situation needed. It was followed by a second, and then a third, with Jack initiating each one. Hiccup broke the third one. When he saw Jack's puzzled look he said, "Well, the table is kinda in the way."

Jack chuckled at that, nodding. "You're right." Jack stood and lifted his chair, placing it next to Hiccup's.

A large blue firework shot up into the sky, bursting with brilliant color and light. Hiccup looked up at it, shielding his eyes.

Before Jack could recapture him with another kiss, Jack's phone rang.

Jack glanced down at the infernal device. Merida was calling. Irritated, he put the phone to his ear. "What is it, Red? I'm kinda busy."

"Get yer busy butt back here right now. Mrs. Corona got up. She heard a noise downstairs, and she's checking rooms!"

Jack sighed. "Ugh, fine." He hung up. "We have to go, Hic."

"Caught already?" Hiccup asked.

"Looks that way." Jack stood up, taking another look at the fireworks.

They headed in to the elevator, alone.

"Well, at least we got one thing out the way." Jack said, pressing

the button for the lobby.

"What?"

"Our first kiss."

Hiccup turned red then, shaking his head. "That's...technically not true." He rubbed his arm. "The first coherent one, maybe..."

"What is that supposed to mean!?"

"Well..." Hiccup looked away. "You were...uh...drunk the first time."

"WHAT!?"

The elevator dinged and the door opened.

A bellhop looked at them with confusion.

Hiccup shrugged, looking at the bellhop. "Oh, he uh, just heard they're making Shrek 5. He's really disappointed."

They left the hotel, quickly walking back home.

"So when was this?" Jack asked.

Hiccup walked with his hands in his pockets. "Well, if you don't remember, I guess it doesn't matter."

" Yes it does! It totally does! I haven't gotten drunk in like, a long time."

"Eh..."

Jack thought back. "Was it...New Year's? "

Hiccup didn't reply.

"Hiiic." He whined. "Don't do this to me."

Hiccup laughed. The air didn't seem as cool as before, and all his nervousness had vanished. Jack pestered him with questions all the way back. Hiccup only supplied him with vague answers, causing his imagination to run wild.

When they returned the housr was still quiet. There was no sign of any of the Coronas. They returned upstairs, reluctantly. Jack walked Hiccup to his door. "Well, here we are."

Hiccup rubbed his arm again. "Yeah..."

When they returned the housr was still quiet. There was no sign of any of the Coronas. They returned upstairs, reluctantly. Jack walked Hiccup to his door. "Well, here we are."

Hiccup rubbed his arm again. "Yeah..."

Jack leaned forward. He pressed a light kiss against Hiccup's forehead. "Good night. "

At first Hiccup didn't reply. Then he pulled Jack's face down to his level for a quock thay left Jack with a look of suprise.

"Good night, Jack."

Hiccup went into his room, leaving Jack alone in the hallway.

Jack took a step back. 'Merida's right. I can't be trusted.' He reluctantly returned to his room.

Merida was asleep again, makinh Jack wonder if there really had been any need to come back early. He stripped down to his boxers and went to bed. Unfortunately, he found he couldn't sleep. He was still thinking about Hiccup. He squeezed his eyes shut, but Hiccup was there too. Hiccup, with his drawings, his cooking, and his dragons. Hiccup, with his freckles, his smile, and his-

Jack began to toss and turn. 'Damn. Now I'm really glad we switched rooms.'

It was four days later when Anna asked hrr sister, "Do Hiccup and Jack seem different to you?"

They were preparing dinner in the kitchen. Elsa was grateful that they were talking at all, after the way Anna had reacted when she asked to be left alone.

"Different how?" Elsa asked, even though she knew the answer.

"They always sit together." Anna said. "In fact, they're up on the roof right now."

Jack and Hiccup were sitting on the roof, side by side.

Hiccup took another sip from his juice pouch. "Star gazing and kool-aid jammers. You really know how to charm a guy."

Jack nodded, putting an arm around him. "I spared no expense, old sport."

Hiccup laughed. It felt as if it had always been this way. If he knew things were going to be like this, he would've told Jack how he felt a long time ago. But then, he still had not told him _exactly _how he felt. They were just together some. There had been no mention of like or love or anything.

Hiccup felt a sense of unease when he realized that this mutual understanding could be temporary. He looked at Jack. What if this was just a summer thing? What if things went back to the way they were?

"Hic?"

"Huh?"

"Is there something on my face?"

"Uh...No. I just..." He shook his head. "Nothing."

It was the next day when Hiccup and Jack were up early seated at the piano. Jack could tell something was bothering Hiccup, even if he insisted otherwise.

He was playing Adele's chasing pavements when came downstairs. "Oh good, you boys are up. You know how to drive, Jack? "

"Yeah. Do you need something, Mr. Corona?"

"Gerda mailed me a package. It's waiting in town at our postbox." He held up a key. "Do you think you can get it? I have a really bad Charlie horse."

"All right." Jack shrugged.

"Great! The keys are hanging by the front door. Thanks a lot."

"Any time, sir." Jack replied as Mr. Corona went back upstairs.

He looked back at Hiccup. "Wanna come with me?"

"Sure." Hiccup answered.

It wasn't long before they were in the car. The post office wasn't far, but it was still much faster than walking.

Hiccup looked out the window as they drove.

"Jack..."

"Yeah?"

"There's something I want to ask you." Hiccup searched for the right words. "I just want to clarify something. "

"Okay, shoot."

"Alright. Um..." 'How do you say this without sounding like a ten year old?'

"Do you...uh..."

"Do I ?"

"Do you-"

Jack continued to look ahead, chuckling. "Do I-"

He heard a loud screeching noise.

"JACK!"

There was the crunching of metal and a weightless feeling. And then, there was darkness.

When Jack opened his eyes again, the world was upside down. Someone was pulling him out of the remains of the car. Blood trickled down the side of his forehead. He blinked repeatedly, trying to make his eyes focus. There was a siren, shouts, and someone talking. He looked down. His arm was twisting the wrong way. Pain began to ebb through his body. He turned his head. The passenger side was gone. It looked

as if it had been flattened and crushed, like tin foil.

His rescuing pulled him out slowly, giving Jack a better look at the car. The whole right side had been destroyed. There was glass all over the street. Two other cars were on the road, twisted and broken.

The hands of strangers prodded him as he was strapped down into a stretcher. It was all somewhat surreal. He couldn't process what he was seeing. There were three ambulances and two cop cars. But there was something missing...

"Hiccup?"

He tried to turn his head as the stretcher was loaded into the ambulance.

"Hiccup." He said again. His own voice sounded foreign and scratchy.

As the stretcher was elevated into the ambulance, he caught a glimpse of something red being loaded into another ambulance.

Burgess Rising Star. Hero. Friend. True Artist. These were all titles bestowed to Hiccup Haddock after his accident. And all to Jack's irritation, from people who barely knew Hiccup. Jack tried not to be too bitter about the situation.

At least Hiccup had survived. All Jack had sported was a cast for his arm. Hiccup had been unconscious for two months. At first, when the surgeries were going on, Jack would hobble on his crutches to see Hiccup down in intensive care.

Sometimes Hiccup opened his eyes. Sometimes he even smiled. Other times, he looked confused. Every now and then, he cried I'm his sleep. And then one day, he stopped waking up.

It happened after they were transferred to Burgess community hospital. According to the doctor, there was brain activity, so there was no reason for Hiccup to be sleeping. There was a chance that Hiccup could wake up. Most of his wounds had healed, though there was the occasional scar.

Jack spent most of his afternoons at Hiccup's bed side, staring out the window. Occasionally, he would talk to Hiccup or take a walk outside. On the weekend he took Toothless home with him. Toothless often spent hours by the front door waiting for Hiccup, and Jack decided to do the same thing. He would sit at Hiccup's side and wait.

This is not the last chapter.

A declaration of everlasting love: Nest's Swan Princess

A dream is a wish: Cinderella

but you have to make them happen, it all depends on you: The Princess and the Frog

If you don't completely hate me, will you take a moment to look at

sample of my novel. I'm trying self publish it and sell it at conventions.

take out da spaces and parentheses.

(/)66dxz

23. Chapter 23

Hello again...H-how have you been.

125 followers? 150 reviews? You guys are the best! Seriously!

DON'T HATE MEajsjdjdjejdkdkdk

Chapter: Waiting for Hiccup.

"Please turn to page fifty four."

The noise of thirty students searching their textbooks broke Jack from his nap. He tried his best to pay attention, he really did. Hiccup, by some stroke of luck, was supposed to be in most of his classes. For this reason only, Jack went to class. Hiccup would need the notes, eventually.

Things were different during the first month. Jack had spent a lot of time speaking to a grief counselor. He hated it. Everyone was always asking him how he was feeling, or if he was okay. They could tell him it wasn't his fault all they wanted. He knew that was a lie.

By now he had fallen into a routine. Go to class, go to practice, go to the hospital. He figured if he didn't act 'normal' he would upset North. North understood, of course. He didn't pester Jack with questions, or get angry when he came home late.

"Mr. Overland?"

"..."

"Mis-ter Over-land." Phil said, louder this time.

"Huh?" Jack blinked. 'Damn...Spaced out again...'

Phil grunted. "Forget it, kid. Okay, Mr. Hawkins. Read the next paragraph."

Jack frowned. He hated that. Last semester, Phil used to chew him out for stuff like that. Now, all his new teachers were a little too understanding. Shang was the only exception.

"Jack! Yer coming to practice?"

It had been hours since anyone had spoken to him. It took Jack a few seconds to realize he was at lunch, and Merida was talking.

"Yeah " He replied."Practice, Wednesday. I'm going."

"Jack." Merida crossed her arms. "Today is Thursday. We're doing drills."

"Oh."

"You need to pull yourself together, Jack."

Jack narrowed his eyes at her. He wasn't in the mood for a lecture. "People make mistakes, Merida."

"How are you going to play without equipment?" She asked.

"Practice isn't until four. I'll go home, get my stuff, and come back."

"Really?" Merida wasn't letting up. "Are you sure you'll remember to come back?"

That did it. He was done talking to her.

Jack pushed back in his chair. "You know what? I'm not sure." He grabbed his backpack. "See you around."

"Jack! Get back here!"

He waved as he walked out, and didn't turn back.

* * *

><p>"And who is this?"<p>

"Jackson. He comes here almost every day."

Jack opened his eyes. He had fallen asleep at Hiccup's side again. He sat up and rubbed his face. Sitting on the other side of the bed was Stoick, and a woman Jack had seen many times on television. The more Jack looked at her, the more familiar she seemed.

"Hello, Mr. Haddock...Miss uh..."

"Hello. I'm Hiccup's mother. You may call me Val."

Valhallarama the Viking queen. She looked different without the makeup and the costume.

Stoick stood. "I'm gonna go get some air." He left swiftly, or as swiftly as a viking wrestler can.

There was a stuffy silence. Jack considered leaving.

"So, how do you know Hiccup? "

"Huh?" He blinked. "Uh...We...went to school together."

"You go to school with Hiccup? Are you one of his classmates?"

"Yeah...We share a few classes. Well, we hung out together a lot." He looked at the floor. "I was with him...in Myrtle Beach..."

"It sounds like you are good friends. Did Hiccup have fun during his vacation? "

Jack stared at her. "Yeah... He liked the Sky Wheel a lot. And the roller coasters. Being up in the air on general, I guess."

"He was like that as a child. When we went mountain climbing, he was never satisfied unless we went up to the top."

She looked at Hiccup's face. "Did he ever tell you how he got that scar on his chin?"

"Yeah."

* * *

><p>It was the following day, after their little 'excursion' with the fireworks. The whole group was headed to the beach again. Jack and Hiccup were leaving last. Just as they headed down, Hiccup tripped on the stairs.<p>

"Hiccup! "

Hiccup tumbled to the bottom, hitting his head, his arm, his neck... He sat up quickly, rubbing his neck. "Ouch..."

Jack ran to him and offered him a hand. "Hey! Are you okay?" He observed Hiccup's face. Hiccup took his hand and let himself be pulled up. "I'm fine."

Jack continued to look him over, checking for bruises. Hiccup became increasingly uncomfortable. "I said I'm fine."

Jack took Hiccup's face into his hands, grinning. "I know you're 'fine'. It's great that you have so much self-esteem."

It took Hiccup a moment to understand what he meant. He blushed. "That's not what I-"

Jack silenced him with a kiss. "I know."

Hiccup sighed. Jack removed one hand from his face. He stroked a small scar with the other. "What's this from?"

Hiccup moved his hand from the spot.

"I...fell off a cliff once."

Jack's eyes widened. True, Hiccup was okay now, but the fact that it had happened still scared him.

"When was this?"

"When I still lived in Berk. We went rock climbing for an endurance test. They make all the kids do it...Without equipment of course. My hand slipped, and I fell. The next thing I knew, I was in my room, and it was a week later."

* * *

><p>"I was so mad at Stoick that day." Valka said, frowning. "I told him Hiccup wasn't ready for it. He had to get stitches, and a cast!"

She sighed. "He's a 'Hiccup' though. Everyone in Berk always expects the most from a Hiccup."<p>

"Why?" Jack asked.

"Hiccup is the name given to the runt of the litter in Berk. The minute someone becomes a Hiccup, they have to spend the rest of their life proving the name doesn't stick."

"I see." Jack replied.

There was silence again.

"Does Hiccup still build those figures?" Val broke the silence again.

"Yeah. They're pretty awesome. They're all over his desk. Vikings, dragons, little houses. It's all really great. His room is full of great stuff."

Val smiled again. "That's great to hear. We don't talk very often, so I wasn't sure. Hiccup never talks about his work. I was worried that he was ashamed of it."

"Well, he doesn't really talk about it. I only found out because I went into his room."

"I imagine that he still does all the cooking."

"He does." Jack replied, smiling now. He relaxed a little. "Hiccup's cooking is something else. I think he thinks I only come over to eat. I have to admit that I've been hooked since he first made me breakfast. Those pancakes are amazing."

"I taught him how to cook, you know. " Valka said.

"You have my thanks, then."

They spoke a little longer before Stock returned. After another hour, they headed back to the Haddock house. Jack stayed for dinner at Valka's request.

Jack knew why he liked Valka. Unlike everyone else, she didn't speak about Hiccup as if he were gone. With everyone else, it was usually past tense when Hiccup was spoken of.

The following afternoon, he went to pick Toothless up after school. A cold wind blew through Burgess that day. The streets were littered with autumn leaves. They crunched loudly under Jack's sneakers as he walked. He was back in his snowflake hoodie, as the weather was cooler.

The streets were empty as Jack walked with his hands in his pockets. He couldn't remember what had happened at school that day, nor did he care. It was Friday, and that meant it was time to be with Toothless.

He came up to the Haddock house and rang the doorbell. Valka came to the door almost immediately. Toothless was sitting by the coatrack. It was his usual spot. He sat by Hiccup's shoes and waited patiently

for Hiccup to come through the door.

"Jack. Stoick said you would stop by. Please, come in."

"I'm just here to pick up Toothless." Jack explained.

"I know." Valka walked further into the house, leading Jack to follow. "I plan on going to see Hiccup in an hour. Will you come with me?"

Jack couldn't find a reason to say no. "Sure."

As they were leaving the house, they encountered Lilo and Stitch out for a walk.

"Hi, Jack. Hello Valhallarama."

Jack glanced at Valka before returning the greeting. "Hi, Lilo."

"Are you going to see Hiccup?"

"Yeah."

"Would you like to see him?" Valka asked.

Lilo glanced at Stitch, who said. "Eh."

"Okay. Just let me tell Nani."

Soon they were on their way to the hospital. It wasn't far from town, which made Jack wonder why more people didn't visit often.

Hiccup was the same as always.

Stitch crawled around the room, sniffing the medical equipment. Lilo approached the bed with curiosity. "He looks like he's sleeping."

Jack took his usual spot in the chair next to the bed.

Val sat on the other side. Lilo looked at them both.

"You can talk to him, if you wish." Valka said.

"Okay." Lilo walked closer, and stopped by Hiccup's face. She touched his arm. "Um...Can you hear me Hiccup? It's me, Lilo."

Watching Lilo talk to Hiccup made Jack feel like his heart was being ripped out. Sire she was a child, but she wasn't stupid. She probably understood the situation well.

"Everyone misses you...Please, wake up soon." Lilo continued.

Stitch sniffed at IV in Hiccup's arm. He growled. "Bad!"

Valka stared at the supposed dig. "What did it say?"

Stitch moved to yank the needle out and Lilo pushed him away. "Stop! What are you doing!?"

"Bad!" Stitch repeated.

Jack looked at the IV. The liquid flowing through the tube looked different from normal. "Hang on..." He reached over and pressed a buzzer attached to the bed.

A doctor walked in shortly. "What happened? Has there been a change in his activity?"

"What's this?" Jack said, pointing to the IV. "It wasn't here before."

The doctor looked at the bag. "My God..." She pulled the needle from Hiccup's arm. "That might be Midazolam!" She felt Hiccup's arm and touched his face. "How long has he been like this?"

Valka stood. "What's wrong?"

Jack's eyes narrowed. "What's in that thing?"

"I'm going to have to ask you all to leave." She ran to the door. "Nurse!Nurse! "

They were soon ushered out of the room by several attendants. Valka looked at Lilo and Jack. "Maybe you should take Lilo home now."

Lilo looked at Jack, who seemed absorbed in his phone. "What are you doing?"

"I'm looking up the drug that doctor mentioned...I think I found it..."

"Jack..."

"It's a sedative, used for calming patients."

"But why would Hiccup need that?" Lilo asked. "He's already sleeping."

"Maybe to keep him that way..." Jack looked at Valka. "I think we should stick around a little longer. Lilo, let's call Nani and have her pick you up."

"But Hiccup might be in trouble! I wanna stay!" Lilo protested.

Jack nodded. "I know. But we don't know enough yet. I'll bring you back tomorrow, I promise. Besides..." He knelt down to her level. "I need someone to watch the house incase something is wrong."

Lilo nodded and sighed. "I understand...Recon is important..." She beckoned Stitch. "Come in Stitch, we have to go."

Jack glanced down the hall. "We can't use cell phones here. Let's go outside and call your sister."

Lilo, Jack, and Stitch walked out of the hospital and to its large backyard. There was a small garden, accompanied by a sitting area. They walked along the stone path. It looped from the hospital, through the garden, and back. Lilo briefly spoke with Nani on

something Jack was sure wasn't a cellphone.

Jack glanced up at the hospital as they walked, his mind was absorbed on the IV drip. That drug was meant for small doses. It was not something that would be continuously put in a patient, and definitely not by a IV. There was no way that was a accident.

After Nani picked Lilo up, Jack returned to Hiccup's room.

"They aren't sure who added that drug to Hiccup's medicine." Valka explained. "They're going to move Hiccup to another room...Just to intensive care, so he can be monitored closely."

Jack was slightly relieved about the increase in security, but still wary of the drug. 'I'll have to watch the staff from now on.'

After Hiccup was moved to his new room, Valka decided it would be best to leave.

"It's getting late, Jack. We should go home."

Jack sighed. "Right...I still have to get Toothless."

"Yes."

When they returned to the Haddock house, it was already dark.

"Perhaps you should spend the night. It's getting late. You can walk Toothless in the morning."

Again, Jack had no reason to decline. He didn't want anymore pitying looks from North anyway.

"Uh...sure."

'The last time I slept over was first time I came here...' Jack remembered being half-frozen in the headed for the couch.

"Oh. I don't expect you to sleep there." Valka said. "You can stay in Hiccup's room."

The thought of staying in Hiccup's room made him uncomfortable. "I don't know about thatâ€¦"

"It's fine.' Valka said. "I need someone to brush off his knick-knacks. I'm afraid I'll break something in there."

"...I don't know. It's..just...That's not my place, y'know?Staying in Hiccup's bedâ€¦"

Despite his protests, he went along with Valka's decision. He wasn't sure if it was the fact that she was Hiccup's mother, or just her disposition, but Jack found that he couldn't say no to her. Stoick didn't complain about the arrangement either. Soon Jack was left with his thoughts, alone in Hiccup's room. Toothless curled up on the bed as soon as he entered. Everything was in its regular place. The little village was set up on his desk. The drawings were still on the walls. The easel was set up for painting.

Everything was there, except Hiccup.

Jack reluctantly sat on the bed. Startled, he found it still smelled like Hiccup. Toothless eyed him curiously, but didn't move from his spot on the bed. First Jack laid on the bed. Next, he wrapped himself up the covers. Then, he cried himself to sleep.

* * *

><p>Jack woke up to sensation of Toothless kneading his paws into Jack's stomach. Tiny claws poked at him through the fabric. He sighed, and was engulfed in the scent of honeysuckle and spice. It was like the scent of autumn itself. "What do you want furball?"
Toothless blinked at him before curling up into a ball. The added weight felt odd, but not uncomfortable.

When he woke up again, it was seven a.m. Neither Valka nor Stoick appeared to be up yet. He took a short walk with Toothless to clear his head. The mysterious sedative incident was still gnawing at him. Who would do that? Why? He couldn't leave Hiccup alone there. Yet, it wasn't as if he could be there all day, everyday. Toothless trotted along, sniffing the occasional plant and jumping whenever a leaf crunched under his paw. Every now and then he would look up at Jack, as if he was expecting something.

When they returned to the house, Valka had breakfast ready. Stoick was in the living room, watching the news. Jack sat at the kitchen counter, mulling over his eggs. His phone rang. It was Merida.

"What do you want?"

"Is it true Jack? Did something happen to Hiccup at the hospital?"

"Who told you?"

"It was on the news, just now."

Jack gritted his teeth. When the accident first happened, reporters had swarmed like locusts to get any information they could. He didn't want to go through that again. "Yeah. Someone tried to drug him. Or has been drugging him. "

"I'm coming by with Rapunzel to see him later."

"Good. I'll be there around one."

Jack was at Hiccup's side as promised when Merida and Rapunzel arrived.

"How is he?" Merida asked.

"Fine for now." Jack replied.

Rapunzel placed a vase of flowers by the window.

Rapunzel took a seat on the left side of the bed. She was carrying a backpack. "He looked cold the last time I was here, so I started making him a blanket." She held up the unfinished product. "I'm almost done with it."

"That's great, Goldie." Jack sometimes wondered if Rapunzel still had feelings for Hiccup. He hoped that she didn't, because he didn't want anyone to feel as awful as he did.

Jack looked up. "There's a camera up there, and a button installed in his bed." He stood. "I'm going to get something from the vending machine. I'll be right back. "

Rapunzel waited until Jack left to speak.

"You're right, Merida. Jack looks awful. Like, he never sleeps."

"I don't think he does." Merida looked at the garden below. "Sometimes he falls asleep in class and then jumps awake like he had a nightmare."

"That's so sad." Rapunzel said, taking out her needles. "He needs to rest. I know this accident has him all riled up."

Merida crossed her arms. "Y'think this was a accident? "

"I would like to think so." Rapunzel said. "I can't see anyone hurting Hiccup on purpose. He doesn't have enemies."

Jack stared at the vending machine. He rarely got hungry anymore, and only ate to avoid suspicion. It seemed like he was doing a lot of 'acting' lately. He bought a candy bar and returned to the room.

Rapunzel was working on the blanket. Merida sat in a chair by the bed. "Did you have breakfast today, Jack?"

"Obviously." Jack sat down and stared at Hiccup. They sat in silence for another hour before Merida went to take a walk.

While she was worried about Hiccup, she was also worried about Jack. His condition seemed to get worse with every passing day. She was afraid he would be a vegetable by the time Hiccup woke up.

That following week, Jack sat at Hiccup's side. He was growing more paranoid.

* * *

><p>He going to the hospital again that afternoon, when he saw a familiar face. A small blonde girl with unruly hair has hobbling down the hallway on crutches.<p>

"Sophie!"

She slipped and he ran to catch her. Steady in his arms, she grabbed a fistful of his hoodie. "Ah! Who are you?"

"Uh..." Jack helped her stand. "I just saw you, and..." He looked at her bandaged foot. "What happened?"

Sophie tilted her head, causing her hair to cover one eye. "I tripped and fell at school. Satisfied?" She looked him in the eye. "You look...familiar."

Jack shrugged, looking away. "Well we both live in Burgess so...I mean...We might have seen each other before."

She frowned. "I guess."

Jack took two steps back. "Well...See you around."

Sophie nodded. "Yeah,sure." She continued to hobble down the hallway. Jack watched her go, startled. He had been so worried about Hiccup he had forgotten all about Sophie. What had happened to her? What else had he forgotten?

He continued to head upstairs to Hiccup. The more he thought about it, the more he realized he couldn't remember the last few days. He took his usual seat at Hiccup's side. Hiccup remained unchanged, as usual. Jack began to wonder what he was doing. Was this right? Did Hiccup even need him? He had a camera watching him, and someone checking on him every now and then. Merida was right. He was forgetting everything.

He leaned back in the chair, drowsy. Hiccup's mother was back in town, too. Between Valka, Stoick, and Hiccup's friends, wasn't that enough? After all, had Jack never asked Hiccup to come along, he wouldn't be like this now.

Guilt fueled his despair and Jack let himself sleep, eager not to think.

* * *

><p>When he awoke again, he wasn't sure what time it was. The room was dark. The EKG machine continued to beep. A light breeze blew from the open window. It had been pulled up high, the curtains dancing in the breeze. He heard the shuffling of feet. Cracking one eye open, He saw a familiar white uniform. 'Just a nurse, here to check on Hiccup.' He glanced down. 'Wait, why is she is heels?' While he was no expert on hospital protocol, he had noticed that most of the staff wore sneakers or soft shoes for comfort.<p>

"Stupid boy..." The woman muttered. "Never leaves." The woman moved to Hiccup's IV. "Should have just stuck it in his vein last time."

The grogginess of sleep began to quickly leave Jack. 'What?' He blinked, staring at her as she took Hiccup's wrist. She held a syringe in one hand. "you brought this upon yourself, Hiccup Haddock."

He recognized that mop of curly hair anywhere. "You!"

Gothel froze. She turned , holding the syringe. Her eyes were bloodshot. "Don't you ever leave, Overland?"

They stood on opposite sides of Hiccup's bed.

Jack's eyes narrowed. "You put that drug in Hiccup's medicine."

She grimaced. "Well done, Sherlock."

"But why?"

"It was Hiccup who realized Rapunzel had been taken." Gothel said.
"It was Hiccup who gathered you urchins together to steal my precious flower."

Jack glared at her. "You stole Rapunzel from her parents. She never belonged to you. You don't own her."

"And I suppose Nicholas North doesn't own you? You were a ward of the state. What's the difference between a state ward and a girl left in a storm?"

Jack felt his pulse racing. He balled his hands into fists.

Gothel put one hand on her hip, casually holding the syringe with the other. "Are you going to fight me, boy?"

He gritted his teeth. "If I have to."

She raised the syringe and swung her arm to jam it into Hiccup's wrist. Jack lunged over the bed, tackling her. She scratched at him. As Jack flinched backward she shoved him away, accidentally stabbing him with the needle. He shouted, and she clamped a hand over his mouth. Jack felt his arm go numb. His legs followed.

Angry, she attacked with her nails first. Jack flailed his arms in an attempt to protect himself. He was half sitting, half standing as he tried to keep a grip on the bed. Her scratches became punches and kicks. The numbness continued to spread through his body. Jack's arm connected with her face. Gothel tumbled backwards. She tripped on several wires. Jack shook his head to keep his vision clear. He watched as Gothel fell back, and straight through the window.

"!" Jack crawled towards the window. He dragged himself to the spot.

Gothel was laying face down on the ground. From the way she was positioned he knew she wouldn't be getting up again. As his body numbed over, he stared in horror at the scene below.

"No...No. I didn't mean to do it." Jack said. He was still mumbling those words when the nurse found him on the floor. "I didn't mean to do it..."

Um...Stick around please. We definitely aren't done yet...Uh... There must be rain before rainbows? Next update soon. The semester is finally over!

24. Chapter 24

Weeping may endure for the night, but joy comes in the morning

Chapter:Healing with Hiccup

Hiccup was walking along the shore. He could see his grandfather in the distance, untangling fishing wire. Hiccup thought that was odd. After all, his grandfather had died when he was a child.

Regardless, he continued to walk towards Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the second.

"Grandpa Hiccup! " He called.

The old man looked up from his wire and gave Hiccup an appraising look. "I was expecting to see Stoick first."

"Huh?" Hiccup was confused.

Hiccup the second shook his head. "Nevermind. Go back, little Hiccup. Go back while you still can."

"Back?" Hiccup looked behind him as he walked. He could see a city in the distance. It was familiar, but it wasn't home.

He turned back to his grandfather. "Back there? "

Hiccup the second sighed. "Go home, Hiccup. Go home."

Hiccup felt sad then, but he didn't understand why.

"But...Grandpa..."

"I DIDN'T MEAN TO!"

Hiccup stopped walking. "Who is that?"

His grandfather nodded. "See? Now go back, little Hiccup."

"I...killed...her."

Hiccup looked around, but he couldn't see where the voice was coming from. "Hello?"

"IT'S ALL MY FAULT! DON'T YOU SEE?! IT'S ALL MY FAULT!"

It was getting louder. Hiccup turned. His grandfather was gone. 'Wait..'

"Jack?"

"It was an accident..."

"Jack..." He started to run. The voice was getting more distant.

"It was an accident..."

"Jack! Where are you?"

He couldn't hear anything.

"Jack?"

"..."

"JACK! "

* * *

><p>Hiccup opened his eyes. There was a bright light. He squinted. A lamp came into view.<p>

There was something stabbing his arm. He tried to look around. From what he could see, it was a hospital room, and he was the patient. He tried to move, but found his body was heavy.

"Hiccup?"

A familiar face came to view. It was someone he had not seen in a long, long time.

"Mom?" His voice was cracked and raspy.

Valka embraced him. She was warm. He tried to put his arms around her, but still could not move. Her appearance scared him somewhat. Valka only came home for important things.

"What happened?" He asked. "Why...am I here?"

Valka smoothed down Hiccup's hair. "Everything is fine, Hiccup."

Hiccup knew that was a lie. "Why am I here? Why...are you here?"

Valka sighed. This was going to be difficult. Now that Hiccup was awake, there were many questions he would want answered. "How are you feeling?"

Hiccup glanced at his IV. "Weird...But...okay. What am I-" He coughed.

"Hold on dear, I'll get some water." Valka stood.

"Waitâ€¦|" Hiccup coughed again, just as Stoick entered the room.

"Heccup!"

>"Dad?"<p>

The wind was knocked out of Hiccup then as his father squeezed him. His father was also warm, making Hiccup wonder why he was so cold. "Hi...Dad."

Stoick pulled back, appraising his son. "Praise to Odin, yer alive!"

Stoick looked as if he was almost moved to tears, which scared Hiccup even more. His father was not prone to displays of affection or any emotion.

"What happened?" He asked again.

"You were in a little accident." Stoick explained. "But yer alright now. Thank the Gods, yer alright."

Valka watched the exchange before leaving the room. In the hallway,

she came across Merida and Jim. It was around noon, and there was no school that day.

"Hello, Mrs. Haddock." Merida and Valka had met once before, when Merida was visiting Hiccup. "How is Hiccup today?"
>Valka rubbed a tear from her face. "That's just it...He's finally awake." It had been a long road to this moment. Valka admitted that she didn't have the best relationship with Hiccup, but she did what she could. She had left Stoick in an effort to broaden her horizons and have a bigger effect on the world. She had traveled all over volunteering and helping others. She was sure she was making a difference just not with her own family.<p>

"Really!?" Merida was ecstatic. "That's great news! Can we see him?"

"Yes. Stoick is with him right now."
>Merida and Jim entered just as Hiccup was trying to get an answer out of Stoick.<p>

"Dad, please. I need to know why I'm here."

"Hiccup!" Hiccup received his third hug for the day as Merida squeezed him.

"Merida, Jim—Hey." While he still wasn't sure what had happened, he was glad it didn't involve his friends.

Once he received water, Hiccup tried to get a explanation again. "I don't suppose you could tell me why I'm in the hospital now?"

Everyone in the room became quiet then. No one looked too willing to describe that past few months to Hiccup. Unable to deal with the silence, Merida tried to give him an answer.

"You were in a car accident with Jack."

"What?" Hiccup recalled the voice he had heard in his sleep. "Is he okay?"

Merida wasn't sure how to answer that. She looked down.
"He's...downstairs."

Hiccup could vaguely remember getting in the car with Jack. "That doesn't answer my question, Merida."

"There's a lot to explain." Jim said. "A lot to take in."

"Well, I have nowhere to be." Hiccup replied, dryly. "Now spill it."

Between the four of them, they tried their best to explain the past few months to Hiccup, from the accident, to the hospitalization, to Gothel's fall. By the end of it Hiccup wasn't sure what to think. So much had happened while he was asleep. As a child he had once lost a week of his life after mountain climbing. He had felt like a stranger when he first woke up. Everything in Berk had kept going without him. This time, he didn't know what to think.

"So...Jack is here?"

"That's right." Valka replied.

"I have to see him." Hiccup said. He felt tired and confused, but he was sure Jack was doing much worse. Jack had apparently been blaming himself for Hiccup's injuries this whole time. He couldn't let Jack believe that.

"You should rest." Valka said. "You only just woke up today. There's much we need to discuss."

"No." Hiccup shook his head. "I can't keep sitting here! I've been resting for almost three months now." He began pulling his cover aside. "I have to-"

He stopped. Looking down he noticed something was missing. He felt suddenly felt hot and cold all over. Valka was right. They had a lot to discuss. Starting with his left leg. Part of it had been amputated from the shin downward. It was a strange thing to see part of himself gone. He continued to stare awhile longer.

"It wasâ€¦ removed after the crash." Stoick said.

Hiccup nodded at the sound of his tried moving his toes. Somehow, he could still feel the sensation, even though they weren't there.

"You're right...We have a lot to talk about."

* * *

><p>After Gothel fell, and Jack was removed from the room, the investigation started. Gothel had changed her name and moved to another state, where she worked as a hospital attendant. She had moved to South Carolina. When she saw Hiccup and Jack's accident on the news, she thought it was providence. She was hoping the two would die. Part of her still wanted to return to Burgess, to reclaim what she had lost.<p>

She slipped into the hospital one day, wearing her uniform. No one paid her any attention. After looking around, she got her hands on a large canister of sedatives. After doing her research, she found that large doses could be fatal. All she had to do was slip Hiccup some medicine every now and then. One day she slipped the liquid into his feeding tube. To her delight, he didn't wake up the next day. She repeated this activity over and over. However...

When Hiccup did not die and Jack was released, she was outraged. After looking up Rapunzel's rescue, she saw that he was the one who had planned everything. Her hatred for him grew. When he was moved Burgess, she decided to kill him.

The security at the hospital was more lax, but there was one issue: Jackson Overland. He was always there. And if not him, Stoick was there. She caught a break one day, a small window of time. She worked quickly, adding the drug to his IV. It wouldn't dissolve into water. She panicked then and left quickly. She hoped enough of it had entered his veins.

But there was Jack again with all his friends. Another week passed. She grew impatient. She hid in the hospital overnight. Jack couldn't be there all the time. And yet, there he was, asleep in the chair. She didn't care. It was time.

As her plans lead to her demise, they also lead to Jack's entry to the hospital. He was now being kept temporarily as a patient. After the drug wore off, Jack had told anyone he saw that he pushed Gothel out the window. He tried to jump out himself once. He refused food. He pulled out his feeding tubes. He did not want any treatment.

He had killed someone.

It was just like Hiccup all over again. It was Jack's fault, and he refused to believe otherwise. The recording told another story. Anyone who saw it agreed it was self defense, including Rapunzel.

When she first saw the attack on video, she cried. But, she watched it three times before she mustered up the courage to see Jack. Ten days had passed since Gothel fell through the window. She took a deep breath as she stood outside his door. Her feet didn't want to move, but she knew things would not change if she didn't. She already had one friend in the hospital, there was no reason for there to be two.

She entered. Jack's bed setting forced him to sit up. His hands were under braces, so he wouldn't remove any equipment. He turned his head to look at her. He looked worse than before. True, Jack had always been skinny, but now she could see his bones.

"Jack..."

His eyes widened. This Rapunzel wasn't a figment of his imagination. This one was real. He immediately began to tug at his restraints, as if he was seeing a ghost.

"N-No! I didn't mean do it! I didn't mean to!"

She tried to steady him. "Jack! Jack, stop!" She wrapped her arms around him. "Stop! It's okay! Stop!"

He stopped moving. She sighed. This was harder than she thought would be.

"It's...not." He said.

She pulled away so she could see his face. "What's not?"

"It's not okay. I killed her. I killed...your mother."

Rapunzel shook her head and tried not to cry. "You didn't kill my Mother, Jack. My Mom is at home right now. My...my... kidnapper died."

Jack shook his head. "No...She was your Mom first. She was...your Mom... for a long time..." He shook his head again. "You didn't hate her...She was your Mom too...And I killed her...I pushed her."

"No, no. Jack. I saw the footage. She was going to kill Hiccup. You

wanted to protect him."

"Did I?" He looked down.

"Of course you did. That's your job." Rapunzel said. "You have to protect Hiccup. But you can't do that from this room."

Jack took a deep breath. "I just don't think I'm the right person for that job, Rapunzel. What if something else happens? What if I mess up again? You can tell me no all you want, but it still feels like it's my fault. I don't want to hurt anyone else."

"We can't predict the future, Jack. No one knows what's going to happen tomorrow. You have to have the courage to face it. I need you to gather that courage Jack, for Hiccup. He's waiting."

"What do you mean, waiting?"

"Hiccup's awake." Rapunzel said, beaming. "He's doing well, and he asked about you." She glanced at the bed. "He knows what happened."

Jack flinched, and Rapunzel shook her head. "And he's worried about you. He knows it's not your fault. That's why I need you to get better, Jack. Because Hiccup needs you."

Hiccup was conscious. Hiccup was okay. Hiccup knew what he did. Jack felt relieved at that moment, overjoyed that he had not condemned Hiccup to life as a vegetable. Despite his grief for Gothel he could feel the urge to run from the room to see Hiccup. Rapunzel had forgiven him for Gothel, but it didn't feel right. Maybe if Hiccup didn't blame him for the accident, he could start believing in them.

"I want to see him."

"Good!" Rapunzel smiled. Maybe Jack would be able to recover now. "He's still upstairs. I can go with you, if you want."

"I'd like that."

They went upstairs, walking slowly. Jack hadn't walked in days, and his equilibrium was off. Rapunzel still had feelings of regret and sadness. She would miss Gothel, nothing could change that. Still, Jack and Hiccup were important to her. When they reached Hiccup's room, they found it empty.

Rapunzel looked around. "He might be doing physical therapy, in the gym. I'll go look for him. Stay here, in case he comes back."

* * *

><p>Hiccup continued down the corridor, gripping the rail for support. He knew he had to keep going, despite the pain. Despite Valka's pleas, he started physical therapy the day after he woke up. It was hard, but he knew it was the best course of action. The longer he stayed off his foot, the longer the phantom pain would continue. The tingly feeling in his left leg had subsided in the last two days. He had been practicing with crutches, but when friends and family were out of sight, he'd hobble around the hospital, holding onto the

wall rails. He wanted to walk. He wanted to run. He wanted to feel whole again.<p>

He was starting to feel tired. Not wanting to collapse in the hallway, he headed back to his room. Out in the hallway, he saw a familiar sight. Jack was sitting on the floor outside the room, hugging his knees. He wasn't half-frozen from the snow, but the look on his face was the same. A lot had changed since that day in the park. Hiccup was not the same person he was a year ago. He would soon be seventeen. Well, technically. He was a senior in high school, he had a job. Gone was the boy who spent all his time in his room.

Jack hadn't noticed him yet. He shuffled closer.

"Hey."

Jack jumped at the sound of his voice. He stared at Hiccup. He knew that this Hiccup was real. He was sweating slightly from his walk, his face flushed. Hiccup was a bit smaller than before, but still in good condition.

" I don't know what this thing you're doing is, but you have to stop. I'm pretty sure you're gonna starve to death, and I don't think the nurse-"

Jack was up and holding him before Hiccup could move. Hiccup stumbled slightly, latching on to Jack. They were both wobbly, but stable enough to support each other. Jack buried his face in Hiccup's shoulder, too tired to cry or speak. Hiccup was grateful for the silence. At the moment all he wanted to do was to hold on to Jack.

* * *

><p>Jack had a new routine now. On weekends he spent his morning with the doctor, his afternoon with Hiccup, and his evenings at home. He had been declared well enough to leave the hospital, but now that hiccup was awake he didn't want to leave. When he didn't have school or practice, Jack worked out at the gym with Jim and Merida.<p>

Hiccup was still recovering. He was concentrating on building his muscles as of late, due to the strain that would come from a prosthetic leg. The doctor explained that walking on a prosthetic was much harder than walking with two legs. Once Hiccup began preparing for his new limb, somethings were a little harder. He had to change the way he slept. He had to take care of his stump. He had to deal with phantom pains. The phantom pains bothered him the most. Every time he thought he had gotten over the loss of his foot, he would feel the same tingling sensation.

It was another Saturday afternoon. Hiccup was trying to make his way back to his hospital room. Judging by the time of day, Jack would be back soon, but Hiccup was already tired. His legs throbbed. He tried to keep himself steady without grabbing the railing. That rail wouldn't be there forever. There would be nothing to hold on if he was walking in the street. He felt the tingling sensation come on again. He squeezed his eyes shut, trying to ignore it. 'There's nothing there.' He leaned against the wall for a minute, his eyes still closed.

"Hiccup?"

He heard Jack call. Steadying himself against the wall, he turned.
"Hey."

"You look..." Jack began.

"Horrible?" Hiccup finished.

Jack shook his head. "I was definitely going to say absolutely ravishing."

Hiccup slid to the floor. "Yeah...Right."

Jack crouched down to his level. "Are you okay?"

"No, I'm not. I'm tired, Jack. I don't think I can walk on a prosthetic. Maybe the wheelchair is the best option."

Jack shook his head. "I think you've just had enough today." He offered Hiccup a hand. "You want me to carry you?"

"No." Hiccup groaned. "Don't you get it? You're not helping me. You won't always be there to carry me, Jack."

Jack's mouth pressed into a thin line. He raked a hand through his hair. "But what if..." He looked Hiccup in the eye. "What if I want to be there?" Jack took Hiccup's hand. "Always."

Hiccup felt his face grow hot. "Well..." He looked away and back at Jack. "I mean, I can't stop you...If that's what you want."

"Great." Jack smiled. He kissed Hiccup then, and whispered in his ear. "'Cause I'm in love with you, Hiccup Haddock."

Hiccup smiled then. "And I...Dad?"

Jack blinked, pulling away. "Dad?"

Stoick the Vast towered over them, looking unamused.

Jack felt a cold shiver go down his spine. "Oh...Hello Mister Haddock."

"JACKSON OVERLAND!" Stoick roared.

Hiccup narrowed his eyes at his father. "Dad, please. You're best friends with Gobber f or Thor's sake."

Stoick didn't acknowledge his son. He grabbed Jack by his sweatshirt, causing Hiccup to latch on to Jack's arm. "Dad! STOP!"

* * *

><p>We aren't done yet.<p>

Oh. And while your at it, check out my wattpad. I have the same name on Wattpad. TrixterDark.

25. Chapter 25

Here we are.

Chapter: Jack with Hiccup

October was finally coming to an end. Jack woke up, showered and dressed for the day. It was chilly out, so he wore his favorite scarf. He ransacked the kitchen for snacks, sticking them all in his backpack. Neither North or he really cooked, so there was always junk food in the kitchen. He texted Merida, Jim and Rapunzel again. Jim had assured him that Stoick would be in the gym today, so he wouldn't have to worry about being strangled.

While Stoick didn't approve of his feelings for Hiccup, Valka was a little more understanding. It also helped that she was just as strong as he was. If not for her, he was certain Stoick would have killed him that day. Valka had said his feelings for Hiccup were obvious, and like Hiccup, pointed out that he had been friends with Gobber for years. Jack had no idea what that meant, but it was the basis of Hiccup and Val's argument, so he stuck by it.

He headed out for Hiccup's house by car. It was a short ride. Jack had been a cautious driver before, but the accident had riled him up a little. Now, He was nothing short of careful at all times. As usual, it was quiet in Hiccup's neighborhood. Jack parked in the driveway, pleased to see Stoick's car was gone. It was one less awkward conversation to have.

He rang the doorbell. Not before long he could hear Toothless scratching against the door. Valka let him in, her smile warm and inviting. "Afternoon, Jack."

"Afternoon, Val."

Valka walked further into the house. "Hiccup!" She called. "Jack is here!"

>Hiccup nearly dropped his knife. He had been working on his little village since morning. He was somewhat nervous, and he figured that keeping his hands busy would help. It didn't. The latest edition to the village was a skinny winter spirit. He was still in the sculpting stage, but Hiccup knew what he wanted to do already.<p>

Hiccup had only been released from the hospital recently. It was still tough getting around the house. The stairs were a bit of a challenge for him. He was still getting used to his first prosthetic. The extra weight made him tire out quickly, so he didn't hang out with his friends much. He did, however, promise Jack that they would go on a date that Saturday.

Hiccup, with a history of zero relationships, was not sure what to expect. He had discussed it briefly with Jack, who promised to take him somewhere special. He supposed Jack knew what he was doing. After all, Jack had dated a significant portion of Burgess high's female population. But that worried Hiccup. Jack's feelings appeared legitimate, but what if this was just a faze?

Hiccup glanced at himself in the mirror. He was dressed in regular attire, a moss green shirt, a brown puffed vest, brown jeans. He had been sensitive to cold lately, so the brown vest was becoming a

staple in his wardrobe. He headed downstairs slowly.

Jack was waiting at the bottom, hands behind his back, smiling. Hiccup felt himself get a case of the 'common greens'. He refused to think of the sensation in his stomach as 'butterflies'. A nest of dragons made more sense.

Valka had gone to the back to let Toothless out, leaving them alone.

"Hey adorable." Jack said, smiling.

"Hey yourself." Hiccup replied. "What's behind your back? "

"I got you flowers."

"Really?" Hiccup wasn't sure what to say.

"Nah." Jack laughed. "It's a jar of molding clay. "

Hiccup smiled. "Thanks. I was just about to run out. How did you know? "

Jack handed the jar over. "It's my job to know these things."

Hiccup placed it on the counter as his mother returned to the hallway.

"Well, you boys have fun." Val said. "What time should I be expecting you back? "

"Like, before Mr. Haddock comes back." Jack replied and laughed. "We won't be out late, I promise."

"Very well. Have fun."

Jack took Hiccup's arm and they began to walk down the steps. Hiccup appreciated the precaution, really he did. However, he also disliked being treated like he was fragile. It was a common practice for his family and friends to treat him like glass. Considering all the progress he had recently made, it was annoying. True, he wasn't able to run, but that didn't mean he was handicapped.

He almost tripped on a leaf in the driveway. 'Okay. I'm handicapped.'

Jack steadied him. "You okay?"

"Uh huh."

"You sure? "

Hiccup narrowed his eyes at him.

"Right..." Jack nodded. "Just checking."

They got in the car. Jack didn't like having Hiccup in the passenger seat, but Hiccup refused to ride in the back. He watched Hiccup buckle himself in.

"Take a picture." Hiccup said. "It'll last longer."

Jack took out his phone. "Fine. I needed a new wallpaper anyway."

"Wait a minute!"

Jack snapped the photo in spite of Hiccup's flailing his arms.

"Jack!"

Jack looked at his phone. "Yup. This one is a keeper. Well, its almost as cute as my current one." He showed Hiccup his phone. There was Hiccup on screen, asleep in his hospital bed.

"What the-When did you take that?!"

"When you were sleeping, obviously."

He put in phone away and started the car.

Hiccup blushed. "...So Where are we headed? "

"To the next town. It's totally worth it, promise."

Hiccup smiled. "Okay."

Jack wanted his first date with Hiccup to be different than all his other ones. Hiccup wasn't a random date, or someone he was only going out with for fun. This wasn't a 'dinner and a movie' type of date. It had to be special. So, he did his research, and found a place he thought Hiccup would love.

Hiccup looked out the window as Jack drove. Some of his nervousness had disappeared. Jack kept a picture of him in his phone? That was both surprising and embarrassing. He supposed he couldn't complain though, considering he had sketched Jack a few times. There was a nice water color painting of 'Jack Frost' hidden behind the small easel in his room. He could never show it to Jack. Never.

Hiccup felt a cold hand touch his forehead. They had come to a stoplight. Jack was giving him a concerned look. "Your face is red."

Hiccup swatted his hand away. "I'm okay. You just drive."

"Sure thing, Mrs. Daisy."

"So...Are you going to tell me where we're going?"

"Nope."

"Okay..."

It wasn't a long drive. Jack and Hiccup talked about school and work. Neither of them had been working much lately due to the accident. Due to Hiccup's celebrity status, he was a household name in Burgess. Every time he stepped out of the house, someone greeted him who he

didn't know. It was because of this that Hiccup was not looking forward to returning to Hooligan's gym or school. He was tired of getting so much attention.

When they reached their destination, Jack parked across the street. Hiccup looked around. "Well, here we are, I guess." Jack got out of the car and opened the door for was a long strip of restaurants. On the other side, there was a park and a walked across the street towards the museum. It was a large building with twin grey columns. A banner was hung above the doors, marking the beginning of a new exhibit: Fantastic Beasts.

Hiccup was a little impressed. His first date was at a museum. "Classy. I bet you take all your dates here. "

"Nah." Jack replied. "Just the cute ones. But I'm feeling generous, so I brought you instead."

"Oh, please." Hiccup walked in. The ceiling was higher than he expected. The sounds of their footsteps echoed in the vast hallway. After paying admission, they walked further into the building.

"What are we going to see?" Hiccup asked.

"Dragons." Jack responded.

"I don't think you'll find many of those in here, Jack."

"Of course you can! First stop, marine life."

They walked into a room full of stuffed replicas of sea animals.

Jack came to an exhibit on Manatees. "See? What did I tell you? Dragons."

"Riiight." Hiccup shook his head. He pointed at a Shark. "And I suppose this is a dragon too."

Jack frowned. "Don't be ridiculous." He walked over to another stuffed replica. This time, it was a Narwhal. "See? Another dragon."

Hiccup laughed. "I can't argue with you there. Tell me Jack, since you're such an expert...Where else can you find dragons?"

"Come with me, and I'll show you."

They went to another room. This time, the theme was endangered species.

"Komodo Dragons." Jack crossed his arms.

Hiccup nodded. "Of course. The only living dragons left."

Jack sighed. "That's what they want you to think. I'll let you in on a secret."

"What?"

"Komodo Dragons..." Jack whispered in Hiccup's ear. "Are actually dinosaurs."

Hiccup stifled a laugh. "No way. Are you sure?"

"Positive. After all, I have a degree in Dragonology."

"Oh yeah? Where'd you study that?"

"At the most prestigious school of knowledge ever created: the internet."

Hiccup laughed then, his voice carrying through the empty halls. The museum was relatively void of patrons.

"I think you've taken one too many blows to the head, Jack."

"Nonsense. Did you know they found a dragon in India a few months ago?"

"You're kidding."

"Nope. I have the proof in my phone."

The wandered on the first floor a little longer. Jack continued to point out 'dragons' that Hiccup had apparently missed. Eventually they went up to the second floor, which was dedicated to human made artifacts.

"Here's a kwan dao from tenth century China." Jack said. "Guess what it was used for."

"Hunting dragons?" Hiccup guessed.

"What? Of course not! Training them, obviously."

"Silly me." Hiccup shrugged. "What's upstairs?"

"The best part." Jack grinned.

It was upstairs that they found the fantastic beasts exhibit, a special event featuring art based on mythical creatures. The mediums were mixed. There were small statues, paintings, sketches, all made from artists within their state. All sorts of creatures were on display. There was a werewolf made of clay and real animal hair. A large painting of a Basilisk. There was even a detailed sketch of Dracula. But the work that caught Hiccup's eye was a small painting on illustration board.

It was his early Nightfury. It was a simple painting, by Hiccup's crashed against the rocky formations surrounding the isle of Berk. The sky was dark with clouds. A large moon high above the cliffs. Illuminated by the moon was a dark winged figure. While it was not the largest point in the painting, it's appearance against the moon made it stand out the most.

"What's this doing here?"

"We sent it in while you were still sleeping." Jack explained.

"Rapunzel saw a ad for the upcoming exhibit, and everyone in the art club submitted a piece. Lilo suggested that one. I thought it was great. Why else would they pick it?" Jack shifted on his feet. "I mean, I would have asked...I did ask, but it's not like you could answer me, so-"

"I would have said no." Hiccup said. "I wouldn't have submitted anything. And if Ms. Ana asked, I'd probably just make something small. I suppose that doesn't make sense...Making work that no one gets to see. I guess it's an inferiority complex. I never wanted to show my work to anyone. But I kept making more stuff. I joined the art club anyway." He rubbed his arm. "So, what I want to say is thanks, Jack. You did what I couldn't."

"You're welcome, Hic."

He intertwined his fingers with Hiccup's. They stood there for a moment watching the silhouetted Nightfury against the full moon.

Jim was starting a afternoon shift when Dagur walked into the gym.

"Welcome back to Hooligan's." Jim said. Dagur's behavior had been tame as of late. Jim supposed this started after Hiccup was hospitalized, but he thought it was a coincidence.

He recalled the day he had taken over Hiccup's shift.

"And where's Haddock?"

"He couldn't come in."

"Too busy playing hooky to work? Sounds like-"

"He's in the hospital. Hiccup was in a car accident."

Dagur had been shocked. He didn't pry for information, though.

Hiccup? Little Hiccup? A car accident? It didn't make much sense. He occasionally saw Hiccup's posse around town now, and none of them looked too happy. Stoick started coming to the gym more often. The large man didn't speak to anyone. After two months went by. Dagur was starting to wonder what had happened. Then, he saw Valka in town. Things definitely weren't looking good.

One day he followed Jack to the hospital. Jack didn't seem to notice the black car following his own. Of course, Jack didn't seem to notice anything at that point. Dagur had seen him walk around Berk in a daze. It was sort of creepy.

When Dagur saw Hiccup at the hospital, he understood. Hiccup looked so frail in that hospital bed. He couldn't muster up the courage to go into his room. Instead he watched as Jack sat at Hiccup's side.

Valka stepped into the gym. Stoick was in the office as usual, sulking.

"We need to talk." She said.

His smile faltered. "Fine."

Their relationship, or lack of relationship had taken a different turn after Jack and Hiccup's accident. The only time they spent together were brief moments while Hiccup was out. Valka supposed it was better that way. Even though they were husband and wife, talking to each other was still hard. Thank the Gods for Hiccup, or they would never have a conversation topic.

"I've been meaning to ask ye..." Stoick stroked his beard. "How long yer stayin'. Don't take it the wrong way but-"

"I know." Valka stood in front of his desk. "I've been wondering that myself. I came to Burgess because I thought he needed me. But Hiccup is not a child anymore. He doesn't need me."

Stoick looked up from his paper work. "Valka..."

"I know what yer going to say, Stoick. How could I do this...How could I come back into yer lives after such a long time."

Stoick rose from his chair. "It doesn't matter how long you've been gone, Valka. This is yer home, here with me and Hiccup. Even if you leave for another six years, we'll be waiting right here."

Valka rubbed a tear from her eye. "I don't think I can leave again."

Stoick smiled. "I don't think I can let ye."

Rain poured down from the heavens as Jack and Hiccup headed back to the car. The cold autumn wind seemed to blow straight through Hiccup. He shivered as he climbed in the started the car and turned on the heat. He undid his scarf and put in on the dashboard to dry.

Hiccup held his hands in his lap as his seat warm up. He stripped off his wet vest. His shivering did not cease.

Jack held his hands. "Wow, they're like ice. You're freezing, Hic."

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "Thanks Captain Obvious. You're cold too, Mr. Frost."

Jack rubbed circles into Hiccup's hands. He breathed on them gently, rubbing them between his own. "Better?"

Hiccup nodded, ignoring the common greens in his stomach. Why did Jack have to take such a simple gesture and make it feel like much more?

Jack kissed Hiccup's forehead and watched his face turn red. Hiccup was ridiculously adorable. Jack had trouble believing he was the only one who noticed this but then, Hiccup was also oblivious to the intentions of others. After all, he didn't notice Rapunzel. How many hearts had Hiccup accidentally broken?

"That's cold." Hiccup said, shivering.

Jack laughed. "Fine. Help me warm up then." He kissed Hiccup again and again. Jack ran his tongue against Hiccup's lips, asking for entry. Hiccup complied of course, wrapping his arms around Jack, whose hands seemed to wander. By the time Hiccup broke the kiss for air, Jack preoccupied himself with Hiccup's neck.

Hiccup shivered, but not from the cold. Jack's kisses seemed to set him on fire. He felt delirious from the lack of oxygen. He was robbed of all coherent thought. The only thing that seemed to matter was here and now. Just Hiccup, and Jack.

Epilogue inbound. Htttyd2 today! I've seen it already at an early screening~ But then I'm watching it again today, so...twice?

I suppose this isn't really the end. I mean, they have to go to college, soâ€¦|.

26. Chapter 26

Sorry. I was working on another project.

THE EPILOGUE IS GONNA BE TOO LONG FOR ONE CHAPTER.

Please visit my page to read "The first trip to Berk for Jackson Overland"

Okay? Okay. MOVE PEOPLE! MOVE!

End
file.